

#5 Social Dreaming Matrix: Covid-19 a year on. Notes from 15th April 21

31 Dreamers

4 Hosts

14 Dreams

43 Associations

Themes & Sense Making from 3 Vertices:

Vertex 1:

Vile/Vials/Violence/Vaccines

A recurring image throughout the matrix was the perfume bottle and its shrinking to become something small and reminiscent of a vial. The delicacy and potency of glass also played a feature in an association of glass vehicles to carry mummified bodies to a museum in Cairo. The images of death and violence appeared within families and in society. An association opened the door to the possibility that the virus could be man-made. The emergence of potential war contexts was also present in the idea of biological warfare and the fear of things breaking. In the presence of a wish for de-escalation of the sense of being overwhelmed, a dream about London being flooded and looking like a scene from the middle ages.

Middle Aged/Ages

Many images of trinity and generations appeared. A mother protecting her children from their grandmother and an aunt scolding her nephew in his approach to finding his lost son. The rising of the Christ from the tomb after the burial celebrated at Easter. There were questions about the capacity to lead and finding destinations during times of challenge (Moses and the leading of Israel to the promised land). The idea of a Good shepherd and the nature of the Sheep also emerged as a middle ground being “between”.

What could not be said

A number of occasions matrix members struggled to find words to describe what they wanted to say. During the reflection dialogue, there was a feeling that fathers were missing and death was missing, yet the first dream was about a father and many associations alluded to death and dying. Perhaps there is a reaching toward that which cannot be named and so it manifests as that which cannot be remembered?

Vertex 2:

The yearning in the matrix was possibly ‘to get back the life that once was’ and a fear and resistance of ‘what got birthed when I wasn’t looking, smelling or hearing’.

The mummified remains of old ‘sacred’ bodies are safe and there are wise fathers advising, and Moses and Jesus and the good shepherd. Babies or young children not associated with joy – but with danger, fear, violence, embarrassment, suffocation and objectification showed up in dreams and associations. Dreams and associations about the perfume bottle that could not be open and lilies without scent or Alice, the deaf mother of prince Philip, or shock at kids being born when pregnancy was not visible.

There was also possibly confusion, anger, futility and resultant loathing of taking accountability when London is anyway flooded and a desire to be a rolling stone untouched by anything and hiding in fantasy.

Dreams and associations pointing to rude awakening to social reality, fear of holding the baby but rather zip-locking it for safety, violence at disturbed sleep, disabled to travel due to expensive cabs, guilt at not de-escalating conflict, fear of holding glass bowls, tiredness with children at home and wishing for schools to reopen – so who would take responsibility for what's birthing, because I am neither ready nor enough?

Vertex 3:

The search for an answer and the matrix itself

“None of this is an answer”. “A father who is advised to search for the answer (about what he missed) through an algorithm.” “The promised land that is never reached”. “I can get no satisfaction”. These links between dreams and associations could reveal a thought on the matrix itself, seen as a never-ending process of research, rather than a way to reach an actual and fixed point of arrival.

The male leadership model.

The male figures emerging from the matrix – from references to the Bible such as that of the “Good Shepherd, Moses, Jesus, to the father who hasn't been in contact enough with his son, to the policeman pointing a gun at an unarmed man, to the leaders who use the camouflage to demonstrate power “- they can be linked with the image of sheeps – “the first living being to be cloned, the black sheep” – to highlight a pattern that is no longer recognized as acceptable or effective. Are we still sheeps in need of guidance? Standing alongside the Black Lives Matter uprisings, a new leadership capable of defusing and de-escalating the violence is needed.

The new and the unexpected

Dreams and associations speak of children, of Neo, the protagonist of The Matrix, who awakens from the illusion of a social ecosystem and so becomes an adult, of Benjamin Button who reverses the old age, youth, childhood and adulthood. And then a grandmother who for no reason attacks her grandchildren. These connections could symbolize in the matrix the unexpected, not only a generational renewal but a form of social presence completely outside the current schemes, that can lead to a radical change of perspective, beyond the male/female (leadership) categories.

Dreams and Associations:

Dream 1: On the phone talking to the wife of an ex-colleague who I have not been in touch with. He's in his early-mid fifties. I'm trying to convince her about something, I seem aggressive, I'm trying hard. I learn that they've had a baby – there's a visual of the new-born in the dream. I am shocked, I was not at all aware of the presence of any such development in their life. I immediately feel embarrassed – stepping on someone's toes. I withdraw.

Ass 1: A few days ago, one of the first times I went for a walk with someone other I've seen consistently over the past year. Quite a shock. He told us that he has 2 children on the way. A rude awakening to social life and things opening up.

Ass 2: Seeing their colleagues on Zoom – noticing someone that someone is going on maternity leave but on Zoom, you can't tell if they're pregnant.

Dream 2: I'm with an old work colleague, when I worked in the film business in the 1990s, she and I have a very old fashioned tape recorder from the 60s. We're not quite sure how to play and record at the same time. Tying to figure it out. I then realised it belongs to Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones. I contacted him and he was so pleased we found it as he thought he had lost it. It's a cassette recorder he used to record 'A Satisfaction' and 'Jumping Jack Flash'.

Ass 3: A rolling stone gathers no moss.

Ass 4: Rolling stone – Jesus taken down from the cross and put in the cave and a rolling stone was moved to shut the mouth of the cave. Easter – it was moved as he arose.

Dream 3: I was holding a baby, I was standing on a beach and there were water spouts all around. Other people were on the beach with me. We were standing in awe, watching these water spouts. I was telling the baby 'Look how beautiful that is.'

Dream 4: I had a baby but I was on a canoe. I was on the Thames. It was a Venetian middle aged version of it – it was very busy. I was very nervous I had the baby with me, it seemed dangerous. It was like London had flooded as I rowed along.

Ass 5: Pollution and the River Thames.

Dream 5: I'm visiting an old friend in his apartment. It's a total mess and very dirty. I try to get his attention, but he ignores me. I was looking around and saw in the mess a very big toy castle and thought it was beautiful. I took apart to have a template to trace the parts. I created a new, white paper castle out of the templates, and I was so proud.

Ass 6: New white castle, Jesus' resurrection – a new beginning.

Ass 7: My mind is stuck – babies, Keith Richards, satisfaction. The sex one has can be very satisfying when you're trying to make a baby without the fear of getting pregnant. Rolling Stones could sing 'I can't get no satisfaction' – they couldn't really give any satisfaction.

Dream 6: Oddly satisfying due to the fact it was very clear with a clear message that kept repeating over and over again. I needed to get a message to Leslie Brissett. The message was a beam of intense darkness meets the incredible lightness of being. I had no idea what that meant, I just felt extremely satisfied that the message was clear. Now I feel satisfied that Leslie is in this matrix and I can drop this in here.

Dream 7: I'm with people either at a conference or training at a hotel. There was a lot of people around me. I realised I had to move to another space, and in my mind it was in the region of Frankfurt. I had to move there, it was too far to walk so I went to the concierge and asked how do I get there quickly, but they told me that a taxi would cost too much. I was frantic about getting there but I didn't know how to.

Dream 8: I was in a countrified town – idyllic, removed from the city. There was a nick-nack shop, I went in there. It was exciting as it was the first time I had been in a shop. There were perfume bottles, I was curious about how they would smell like. As I tried to grab them, they would turn smaller and smaller. As I reached one, it was a tiny vial and I was afraid to open it in case it broke.

Ass 8: Perfume – the French novel in which a man has no smell of his own and spends his whole life trying to figure out how he smelt and how he associated with the world. Also reminded me of the covid symptom – loss of smell.

Ass 9: Smell – the five senses are a big part of sexuality. Babies – moving forward, a new beginning. We're frightened about moving forward and getting back into the world with all of our senses feeling vulnerable.

Ass 10: Smell – I bought some flowers in the supermarket and there was a label that said: 'without scent.'

Ass 11: My partner at Easter came home with a bunch of flowers. When we put them in the vase, we found out they had no smell. Whenever I walk outside to the hills, there are all the scents there from the grass and flowers and everything.

Ass 12: Travelling and always having to transit through Frankfurt. Taking long flights from Asia to America. This need for wanting to smell fresh air when in transit. It would be a whole day when one could smell fresh air. A feeling of transit – duty free shops – perfumes. Keith Richards – keeps playing in my head – becomes 'dick' – the messiness of creation and paper castle and not wanting the messiness. Some people are going into the mess and creating babies.

Ass 13: The Unbearable Lightness of Being – Prague Spring of 1968 – Arab Spring – Black Lives Matter. Protest and rebellion during this time.

Ass 14: Recent news – leading CEOs signing a petition about freedom, and some of them not. Amazon declaring they're going to double the numbers of black leaders. One of the lights that covid has shown on the darkness and the weight that black people carry. Light is shining on them – they can be in the light.

Ass 15: Bricks. Strong association to the perfume and the vials getting smaller – Alice in Wonderland.

Ass 16: Springtime – a song I heard this morning as I washed up my dishes. Sarah Vaughn – April in Paris. Very beautiful.

Ass 17: Saying in Italy: April is good for sleeping.

Ass 18: Paris – sudden sense of longing. I've never been to Paris but always wanted to. It stirs something inside of me. Something to do with love.

Ass 19: Paris – in the middle of South Africa, there is a little town called Paris. You can never translate it. I was invited to this little town, with the joke we were going on an international trip but we were not going to need our passports.

Ass 20: Wizard of Oz – the journey. Lacking something.

Dream 9: My grand nephew, who is 12, has been kidnapped. I am urging his father to take action. I tell him that he must identify what he misses of his son before he can now how to retrieve him. I ask him what he misses and his dad says 'I miss his smart answers.' I am angry – you can get an algorithm to do that! You have to identify what you really miss.

Dream 10: My children – one is 12, one is 8. We travelled to visit my mother, who lives in a different country. We were all asleep. My son woke up and was upset, but became incredibly happy and was shouting at the top of his voice. I tried to make him quiet but my daughter got up and joined him. My mother came out and was really angry. She hit my daughter and went to hit my son but I stood in front of him and told her 'don't you dare hit my children.' I woke up and was very tense, but thought that I didn't handle it well. I didn't de-escalate it well.

Dream 11: Woke up in distress. My mum was having a go at my sister, she grabbed a big belt and wanted to beat me. I grabbed a smaller belt. I managed to get the belt from her hand and realised that she's not that strong. I woke up.

Ass 21: De-escalation. Fighting against powers who aren't that strong but cover themselves in weapons and camouflage. Who's actually the power? The people with weapons have escalated, not de-escalated.

Dream 12: I was walking my dogs in the neighbourhood. Came around a really sharp corner, there was a police officer pointing a gun at someone in the car. There was someone holding a cell phone filming everything. I kept on yelling 'don't shoot them, shoot me.' Someone appeared with my dad's voice, but wasn't my father and said 'none of this is the answer. Everyone stop.'

Ass 22: When you are in a fight, how do you stop it?

Dream 13: There is a man who is a powerful politician in India. He's paralysed partly, but still a significant figure. I'm telling him to go ahead and approach another older man who was my father's business investor. 'Do not be uncomfortable or afraid, go ahead and have a conversation.'

Ass 23: I feel like saying: 'hush! Enough!'

Ass 24: The mother's anger – fighting. Mother Nature – our earth, our climate and what it is telling us. George Floyd, crying for his mother.

Dream 14: There's a new-born baby, I think it's mine but I'm not sure. There's a lot of commotion. A small, locked pouch, in the palm of my hand, which the baby is in. I think it can't breathe. I open the lock and it turns into a bigger baby.

Ass 25: The movie 'The Matrix' – born new again.

Ass 26: Suffocation – Covid – wearing masks all the time. Not being able to breathe, waiting, trying to get some fresh air.

Ass 27: A picture I saw this morning of a family in the Netherlands, where 3 of them have a large plastic sheet over them, so that they can hug another family member outside of that plastic sheet.

Ass 28: 'Enough' – connected to the question if covid was created by hand and not in the 'natural way.' Sci-fi, if things will go on in this direction, what will happen to our world? Will we be able to clone people? Double the number of black managers. Might not need our senses, like smell, which we don't use anyway in Zoom. A fear that we all share – what will the future be?

Ass 29: Conversation with a colleague. Talking about family businesses, he mentioned he can't wait for the children to go back to school. He didn't say it but it seemed as though it has been overwhelming for his wife and himself to manage. A feeling of being stuck and of sadness.

Ass 30: The shop of perfumes becoming smaller as you grasp for it. Looking forward but the future becomes smaller and smaller until there's not much left. 'Diminishing returns.'

Ass 31: The vials – the delicate glass in which the perfume is contained. Getting smaller and smaller. Someone putting a piece of glass from ancient Egypt in the palm of my hand – the baby in pouch. I was afraid to break this piece of glass that was 5,000 years old. A parade in Cairo – an opening of a new museum. An elaborate extravaganza. The mummified remains of leaders were placed in these large cars that had been made to look like boats going down the Nile. You could see the man who was very famous waiting to receive these sacred bodies, preparing with his mask on. When he received them, he took his mask off.

Ass 32: Sense of sadness when someone speak about Covid being created by man. The meaning of 'being schooled' – losing, defeat, failure. What lesson is humanity supposed to be learning right now because of covid?

Ass 33: 'No, these are not the ways.'

Ass 34: The dreams of the father speaking – giving guidance, the need of the authority of a good father to help guide us.

Ass 35: Clone – the first clone was a sheep. An article 'are we like sheep?' – words from the bible.

Ass 36: The bible – Egypt – the Nile – Moses. I watched a film about Moses, he's supposed to lead people, but he's a shy person. He asks 'why me, I don't like to communicate, I don't want to talk' and yet, he is the one who is supposed to free the people. Unable to get all the words out.

Ass 37: Alice in Wonderland – Prince Philip's mum who was called Alice and who was deaf.

Ass 38: The children of the matrix. Revolutionary potential of social dreaming. Back to the bible – the sacrifice of children, the intergenerational cruelty that we're experiencing at the moment. Very hard to talk about – children should be seen and not heard. The image of the film reels, the castle – 'The Man in the High Castle' – a powerful reality in another

world, reminds me of social dreaming. People are prepared to die for something so powerful in one reality.

Ass 39: The children – messages I got over night from my sister in Buenos Aires – in a big lockdown due to covid. My nephews and nieces are sad. Kids need to go back to school – don't stop school.

Ass 40: The sheep in the bible and the idea of the good shepherd taking care of the sheep.

Ass 41: Sheep and Black Lives Matters – whenever someone is rebellious in the family, they are labelled as 'the black sheep.'

Ass 42: Keep on coming back to the idea: we don't know if we're actually the parent or not. Who's baby is it?

Ass 43: A song title keeps on going on in my head: 'Stop, in the name of love.'

Blog compiled by Leslie Brissett, Alfredo Veneziale, Uma Ravikumar and Lucy Walker