

**PAUL C. COOPER**

**“Dreaming Terror, Delight & the Liminal In-Between”**

This paper describes and addresses the various relationships derived from the image of gap, precipice, and abyss with emphasis on the interacting dynamics that can occur between being, knowing and the liminal “in-between” as these states evolve spontaneously through the patient’s metaphors, imagery and dreams.

Drawing from Zen teachings and from the writings of psychoanalysts who have embraced the mystical aspects of psychoanalytic experience, I outline the complementarity that exists between the seemingly contradictory agenda of the scientific model’s endeavor to fill in gaps in knowledge and the mystical model’s agenda to create gaps in order to enter unknowing states.

Dream material exemplifies the spontaneous emergence of the gap imagery and the fluid nature of the oscillating dynamics that occur between knowing, unknowing and the liminal in-between. While of significant value to psychoanalysis, symbolic meanings can occlude the actuality of the analysand’s or of the spiritual seeker’s affective and relational experiencing, particularly with respect to the human tendency to concretize experiential states that emerge in the psychoanalytic encounter. However, the same symbols can guide the analyst and analysand through the terror of uncertainty and provide a deepening into the delight of fully-lived, spontaneous and creative living.

I emphasize the psychotherapeutic encounter and spiritual experiencing, in relation to the paradoxical coexistence of ultimate and relative realities and the reciprocal dynamics between states of experiencing that might otherwise appear opposed. Clinical material supports and exemplifies the speculative aspects of the discussion.

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