The dream of the poet is to make his return to the unlimited freedom of dream. Some poets mean to take us back to that wonderful realm with them; others seem not to care whether we follow. But we can always go as far as we ourselves can imagine. When the poetic discourse takes a sudden indirection, a "detour" from the main route of expository narrative, if we follow the poet's signals we find ourselves in the otherwise inaccessible inner sanctum of poetic vision; the cave of imagination where true poetry is born. There we partake freely of the poet's dream.

Although even as early as Book 2 of Homer's *Iliad* a dream plays a leading role in structuring poetic discourse, perhaps the most intriguing classical example of the use of dream (or dreamlike phenomena, including varieties of aesthetic vision) as a narrative strategy of indirect discourse occurs in Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Aeneas has seen all he needs to of the cavernous underground, and is now ready to undertake the great labor the sybil had predicted: his return from Hades to the stars. At this juncture the Virgilian narrator reworks a famous passage in the *Odyssey* (19.560–570), where Homer has the gates of horn and ivory reflect the complementary natures of Odysseus and Penelope (Amory, p. 45). The narrator of the *Aeneid* now gives us a piece of information that inexplicably undermines the credibility of the entire narration:

There are two gates of sleep; of which one is made of horn, by which easy exit is given to true shades, the other of gleaming ivory polished to perfection, but through which the spirits send false dreams skyward. Here, then, Anchises accompanies his son, and the sybil with him, when all was said—and sends him through the ivory gate. (*Aeneid* 6.893–98)

Knowing what he now has told us makes us wonder whether the narrator himself believes what he tells us; the discursive progress of the poem—the rhetoric of its structure which is at the same time the structure of Augustan myth—is interrupted, for a moment, by the "indirect discourse" of informational digression. The result of

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Those references not specifically listed in notes are to be found in Dreamworks 1(2).
the suspense in linear progress is a psychological interruption of the poem's aesthetic that casts comprehensive doubt upon the validity of the epic argument, and at the same time upon Virgil's attitude toward his poem's alleged purpose.

The passage is very like the notorious door Sterne "shuts" early in *Tristram Shandy* against the reader who cannot stand digressions—and never opens again. As the first half of the *Aeneid* comes to a close, with Aeneas prepared to assume the title of "father" now that he has come to terms with his dead father Anchises, Virgil has constructed, through an amazing indirection, what might be called an aesthetically proleptic gap, or progressive hiatus, in his otherwise straightforward linear narrative. The gap is proleptic because its significance increases as the poem continues; the hiatus is progressive because the reader realizes its effect gradually as its logic reorganizes the remainder of the epic. The discursive anomaly, that is, is not left behind here in Book 6, but is carried forward to the end of the *Aeneid*—as though the second half of the poem were charged magnetically by this "gap" in its logical structure. Aeneas comes back to the surface of the fictional world through the gate of false dreams; and the Virgilian narrator has gone out of his way to inform us of this. The chief character of the epic, his substantiality within his heroic world carefully linked to the legendary prehistory of Rome, is with this single stroke severed from seamless credibility. As he walks onward toward Tiber, the hero of Virgil's epic is no more substantial—no more palpably real—than the shade of Palinus or we meet with him in Hades.

What does Virgil mean to express with this surprising narrative technique and its undermining strategy? Why this reference to dreams and their implied relationship with the characters of poetic fiction? Is the narrator suggesting that Aeneas is a kind of dream (the false kind)—that the epic myth, propagated by Virgil at the request of Augustus, is as unsubstantial as a dream? Of course, he may be telling us that dreams are as substantial as myths—that ready-made myths, the products of the poetic imagination, can play as meaningful a role in reality as can myths inherited from the remote past (formed by the archetypal unconscious, in Jung's terms). Joseph Campbell's alliance of psychology and anthropology comes to mind: "Myths are public dreams; dreams are private myths." The private manufactured myth of Augustus can become the public dream of the Roman people, providing the empire with a heritage and mythic force to complement its present imperial force.

Yet an altogether different interpretation may be as valid: that Virgil is allowing his narrator to doubt the authenticity of his own narrative, to doubt its mythic qualities; and so, perhaps, to express subtly the inadequacy of an urbane poet faced with reconstructing a myth that—no matter how complicated and beautifully expressed—must always remain only pseudo-Homeric; for Homer could call upon the living treasury of actual myth, while Virgil must rely upon the conscious invention and elaboration of the individual, and imperially dictated, imagination. This sudden and immense sense of doubt—the accumulating suspicion of the unsubstantiality of Virgil's hero—accompanies us to the very end of the *Aeneid* and its unilluminated shadows. The progressive hiatus of this indirect discourse (the digression on the gates) diminishes our conviction at the same time that the direct discourse seeks to affirm it. The result is the enhanced sense of "depth" we experience when we read Virgil's poignant masterpiece.

Macrobius' intriguing commentary on the dream of Scipio and Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* link the dream literature of the classical and medieval periods. The Middle Ages are replete with dream poetry, from Dante's *Commedia* to the *Roman de la Rose*. No medieval dream poem is more subtle and psychologically persuasive than Chaucer's *Boke of the Duchesse*, in which the dramatic tension between narrator-as-dreamer and dreamer-(awakened)—as-narrator dictates the reader's involvement with and response to the poem's
treatment of the relationship between death, memory, and perfection. From the dark cave of Morpheus (the god of sleep), the poem moves to the visionary perfection of the narrator’s dream; the black knight the narrator encounters in his dream is at one and the same time the narrator’s suffering self and any self, with whom the reader (and particularly John of Gaunt, to whom the poem is supposedly directed) can identify. The suffering is resolved by the dream on one hand and by the poem as dream for the reader on the other hand.

From Santa Teresa and Juan de la Cruz to Pilgrim’s Progress, the Renaissance continued to exploit the relationship between dream and poetry in every way imaginable. Shakespeare, like his great contemporary Calderón, (who wrote Life Is a Dream), took theatrical advantage of the analogies between dream and drama. Macbeth murders sleep (Richard Wilbur’s poem in this issue reverses the metaphor), so that the ravelled sleeve of care remains, for him, unknit—as it does for Hamlet and Richard III; Richard complains that his night has been so full of “ghastly dreams/ That... I would not spend another such night./ Though ’twere to buy a world of happy days.” Mercutio, in Romeo and Juliet, calls dreams “the children of an idle brain,/ Begot of nothing but vain fantasy” and doesn’t let them bother him at all. We experience much more in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, where Shakespeare mixes dream with fantasy, visions, hypnotic spells, magic, and every form of enchantment imaginable—leading to Theseus’ famous formula, linking these phenomena with madness, poetry, and love:

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman; the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen’s beauty in a brow of Egypt;
The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The form of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Theseus’ statement concludes with the rationale by which we believe in the reality of dream and of poetry:

Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear! (4.1)

Theseus’ objectivity would be corroborated by McCrady and Hobson (1977); but neither the theatrical king nor the contemporary neurobiological investigators would deny for a moment the reality of dream’s effect on human behavior. “What visions I have seen!” Titania declares to Oberon; Bottom, awakening from his vision, declares in a marvelous parody of Corinthians: “I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was.” After the indirect discourse of parody has managed to communicate what Bottom says cannot be communicated, the dreamer finds a name for it:

... The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was... It shall be called Bottom’s Dream, because it hath no bottom... (4.1)
St. Paul’s mystical vision is translated into Bottom’s fantasy, puckishly rearranged both in drama and language.

Sleep, dreams, death, ghosts, memories, madness, and imagination circulate through Shakespeare’s plays like a vitalizing current; he understood, as Borges points out, “the fundamental identity of existing, dreaming, and acting” (Borges, 1970, p. 46). Both in Hamlet’s famous soliloquy (3.1) and in Act 4 of The Tempest the metaphorical identification of life and dream, drama and imagination, is given natural expression and natural closure:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is round’d with a sleep... (5.1)

Like his character Prospero Shakespeare himself understood how the theatre allows the poet to direct his dreams in such a way that the audience can take part in them.

Another great contemporary who understood the poetic function of dream was Cervantes, who died the same year as Shakespeare. The “cave of the Montesinos” episode of Don Quixote is a marvelous intertextual indirection on the part of the master strategist of indirect discourse. Whether the hero’s account of his descent is a “dream report”—as Sancho suspects and Don Quixote stalwartly denies—or a dreamlike fabrication matters not at all because it strays not “one iota” from Don Quixote’s sacred vision of the truth. One remarkably incidental element at the start of this famous episode strikes me as most perplexing and enchanting. After Don Quixote has been bound with the lowering-rope by Sancho and the cousin and is ready to descend, he pauses to say:

It was thoughtless of us not to have provided ourselves with some little cattle bell to attach near me on the same rope so that you might be able to tell from the sound of it that I was still descending and still alive. However, since there is no longer possible, I am in God’s hands—may He be my guide."

The case of the missing cattle bell has always intrigued me. Why would the narrator have his character tell us about a bell he himself and/or his character forgot to insert in the narration proper; why would he use indirect discourse to point out the insufficiency of his primary direct discourse? We might not have noticed the insufficiency otherwise. Now we are led to believe that the character’s memory is superior to that of the chronicler: a strange state for us to be in, who expect chroniclers to imagine characters and not the other way round.

The cattle bell, which is absent from Don Quixote’s world except in his speech and imagination (his imagined imagination, after all), is all the more present in our world, as we hold the narrative which includes his speech in our hands (and in our imagination). Therefore the bell has the effect Don Quixote (and Cervantes) intends: it has alerted us to the significance of the entire Montesinos episode. Without the bell there, we now know, we cannot measure the depths of Don Quixote’s exploration by any familiar external measure. We will have only his report (the bell here, in our imagination) and we have no alternative but to accept all he tells us or to reject all.
The nature of the cave is enough to remind us of where indirect discourse means to take us when it relieves us of our reason: it transports us from the direct discourse of the poetic fiction to a narrative hiatus where anything but what goes in direct discourse goes (Lewis Carroll understands the advantages of the dream strategy when he sends Alice plummeting to the bottom of a familiarly strange well). For the cave is almost inaccessible, covered with “thick bushes” (“montesinos” in Spanish, making us wonder which came first, the bushes or the Count—which world gives its name to the other?), ineffably deep, unexplored, eternally waiting only for the most intrepid discoverer. “Just such an undertaking as this,” Don Quixote tells us with Biblical solemnity (none of Dante’s complexly false modesty about him), has been reserved for him from the earliest times. Only he can free the inhabitants of the cave from the spell which holds them enchanted—a most topsy-turvy arrangement, when the enchanted world down there is unenchanted by the emissary from the unenchanted world up here whose normal role up here is that of enchanter. All this suggests Don Quixote’s origins: he is, after all, a self-appointed emissary. We needn’t pursue detailed comparisons with Homer, Virgil, Plato’s Republic, Dante, and Rabelais to see that Cervantes’ cave has an ancient history. As important as its history is its psychological significance.

The cave, whatever we associate it with the “subconscious” or the “unconscious” (Freud’s or Jung’s term, respectively) or not, is where Cervantes locates imagination. On one hand, it is the imagination of Don Quixote; and on the other, it is the imagination of all human beings, and is particularly emblematic of the poet’s imagination now expressed by the poet’s avatar Don Quixote. The darkness of the cave is not only the darkness of death, but also the night darkness of dreams (The Egyptians were the first to express the connection between the two, believing that the soul leaves the body during sleep and in death); dream; like death, is liberation, freedom to move by volition only, without limitation. And freedom to the artist, to us, is identified with life; Virginia Brady Young’s poem, in this issue is an example:

Summoned in a dream,
I sought my brother in the earth,
falling through ancient graves

to the beginning of Spring.

Interrupting the primary narrative of Don Quixote (and pre-empting the primary narrator, as Homer does in the Odyssey when Odysseus takes over his own story in the court of Alkinoós), the poet sends his character to explore the depths of the cave. The character’s subsequent report, if we can figure out how to receive it, may be of great use to us in exploring this work of Cervantes’ imagination and the function and products of our own. Don Quixote’s stature is mythic: his sacred, priestly, shamanic character is defined in his ability and determination to accept the mission to explore fully and unflinchingly the deepest recesses of the cave; and, most importantly, to return skyward and tell us what he found and saw. Will we believe his eyes? His words? Do we believe Aeneas fresh from the ivory gate? Do we “believe” the dreams of others, or even our own?

The episode makes us wonder about our ability as readers external to the fiction although Borges has warned us that our external position is by no means secure (Borges, 1964) to differentiate between the fiction of Don Quixote’s dreamlike experience and the dreamlike nature of Don Quixote’s continuous, Odyssean, ever-turning fiction (as his account of the journey creates it in miniature); the product, that is, of his inexhaustible verbal imagination, imagined for him by Cervantes. Because Don Quixote says what he imagines and imagines what he says, we must be content to imagine what he says and to accept what he imagines without any unnecessary reaching out after fact (as Keats had it) since, in this story, unimagined fact has nothing to do with truth. Since Don Quixote (and his Merlin
Cervantes) invents worlds as he speaks, how in any world can we know that he isn’t inventing what he saw in the cave as he talks? “For the poet, as for God, the word becomes the world.” As both John Hollander and Denise Levertov indicate in their essays, the making of the poem is itself a reentering into dream vision. The reentry has organic life of its own, whose form is revealed only as it unfolds. The poet dreams in the cave, awakens to recall the intensity of his or her descent, then reenters the cave with his waking eyes open, during the writing of the poem—and, in doing so, may discover things not seen in the cave before, or at least not recalled. As Holly Prado (p. 132) puts it: “What can ever be explained? . . . I shout, ‘the end of that kind of poem becomes what you’ve learned in the process of writing the poem itself!’ . . . then I’m in a cave full of orange-red pillars: it’s my creative world.” The poet sees when she dares to open her mouth.

Don Quixote says he “traveled into that obscure region below without any certain or determined path,” and so are we uncertain, but nonetheless filled with eagerness to see, as we descend with his words into the narrative, the indirect dreamlike discourse, of his descent. The extent of Don Quixote’s adventures down there shows us that imagination is aloof from time; it is in the world of imagination that the Spanish and Italian proverbs have their truest significance: “la vida es corta pero ancha” (“life is short but wide”) and “c’è più tempo che vita” (“there’s more time than life”). We all know it often takes more time to say what we imagine than to imagine what we say; the translation between the two worlds—of imagination and expression—is inexorably doomed to insufficiency. We continue to attempt it, constructing what Lowry Nelson calls “the rhetoric of ineffability,” only because the energy that flows into us from the crack between the two worlds seems somehow to be the most meaningful energy we know. Response to the dreamlike strategies of discourse used by poets to return us to dream requires the active effort of the reader’s imagination. When a poem, like a dream, presents its images “without transition,” as when an old film jumps in the projector” (Richard Wilbur, “Walking to Sleep,” p. 106), we must provide the transition or the readiness to experience the poem’s images without transition. Although in this respect dream-poem syntax resembles film syntax, the reader of the poem is even more actively involved than the audience of a film. The poem will not keep running without our participation; it lapses into silence.

“I think,” Sancho tells his master after hearing only part of the account, “that Merlin or those enchanters that laid a spell on the whole crowd Your Grace says you’ve seen and communicated with down there have stuck into your imagination or your memory all this machination that you’ve been narrating to us, and all that remains to be narrated.” Sancho’s sweeping dismissal places him in an excessive position which neither we nor he want to maintain. But something true is said in the middle of it: the identification of imagination (magin) and memory (memoria). We are almost relieved to hear how easily Don Quixote’s imagination rises to Sancho’s ineradicable enigma: “Such a thing could be, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “but it is not so in this case; for I have narrated what I saw with my own eyes and touched with my own hands.”

What the poet sees in the dark cave he sees for us (as Teiresias saw for Oedipus who would not accept the prophet’s vision). As Allen Katzman’s poem in this issue puts it, “A DOOR IS OPEN./ An immense stairway, infinite and accessible.” Robert Gluck’s “Poem” (p. 130) suggests that the cave is a mouth, its free atmosphere derived from its emotional, sexual, vegetable consistency (William Moritz, too, sees it as a garden of creativity [p. 111]—and we are approaching nearer the primal myth). Why should we not believe what Don Quixote tells us or will tell Sancho and us about the cave? What reason have we strong enough to contradict a shaman? He has gone into the other world for us. Gary Snyder’s “Journeys” ends with another example of the poet’s descent:
We were at the bottom of the gorge.
We started drifting up the canyon, “This is the way to the back country.”

The poet goes into that “undiscover’d country” (as Hamlet calls it, referring to death and dream at once) from which no waking traveler returns; but he returns in that exceptional waking action known as poetry—to tell us what he saw “up the canyon,” in “the back country.” Richard Wilbur’s ironic narrator in “Walking to Sleep,” also speaking of a labyrinthine descent, warns, “Nor must you dream of opening any door/ Until you have foreseen what lies beyond it/” but the poet is precisely the one who opens doors without foresight, relying only on the exhilaration of hindsight, of having been there before. Caution is foreign to the poet; he wants only to see and speak the truth of the cave.

What Heraclitus meant when he said, “the way up and the way down are the same thing” is not that going is the same as coming back, but rather that the path, the way that joins the waking world with the dreaming world, the world of day with the world of night, life with death, begins at the same place. That place is the center of being occupied by the poet (as well as the madman and the prophet), where one moves freely from one state of awareness to another, “keeping in touch,” as contemporary jargon has it, with the sources of our life. Mythology calls that “way” the axis mundi, the tree at the navel of the earth (whose roots mirror its branches, as with the ancient oak of Dodona, sacred to Zeus—recalled in Doraine Poretz’s poem and commentary in this issue) up and down which the poet climbs freely to explore all the possible realms of experience:

The first function of art is exactly...the first function of mythology: to transport the mind in experience past the guardians—desire and fear—of the paradisal gate to the tree within of illuminated life. In the words of the poet Blake, in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: “If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” But the cleansing of the doors, the wiping away of the guardians, those cherubim with their flaming sword, is the first effect of art... (Campbell, p. 164)

Another name for that axis, the way referred to by Heraclitus, is the human spine (with the serpent at its base, as in Kundalini yoga), with those circles of bone that point like arrows from birth to death and beyond both. Daniel Berrigan’s poems share these images with Linda Puffer’s (both in this issue): “the bone lyre curves like a question.” How witless it would be of us to say we don’t believe in someone’s imagination; for the cave of imagination is the ineffable source of poetic vision and the poet brings back from it what he or she wants to share with us. If we don’t trust the poet, we close off the cave to ourselves forever.

W. S. Merwin’s “A Fable of the Buyers” (p. 182) expresses the inability of waking thought to reduce the freedom of dream and imagination to its insistently rational categories. The demand for reason in all things, allowed to become obsessive, can destroy our access to the cave altogether—though it cannot affect the cave—which continues to exist whether we care to enter it or not. Direct discourse must relate a to b and then to c and so on before it can prove to us how z is connected with a; as it progresses in this orderly, linear fashion, direct discourse may become too thin to shadow forth “the form of things unknown” from the depths of the cave. William Moritz’s comment makes a similar point. The poetic narrator—from Dante and Chaucer to Calderón and Shakespeare; from Cervantes to Keats and Shelley and Poe, and to the poets whose works are collected in this issue—finds ways to introduce the shadows while yet remaining up here with us in the light of
accessible discourse. Indirect discourse is a strategy that allows the poet to avoid retreating entirely into surrealism or into dream itself—where juxtaposition can occur with freely turning serendipity.

Indirect discourse—strategies of temporary digression, flashback, internal narrative, associational narrative, insight into characters’ dreams, fabulous narrative, and myriad other variations—brings the cave as much as possible to light, turns those obscure forms “into shapes, and gives” them, like the cattle bell, “a local habitation and a name” up here in our waking imaginations. We are thereby given poetic access to depth, in the sense intended by Ortega y Gasset: “Depth is fatally condemned to become a surface if it wants to be visible” (p. 59). Sometimes the poet descend in order to see what must be seen, the naked truth (as in Kathleen Fraser’s comment in this issue). Sometimes the poet returns from the depths of the cave to remind us of obvious truths we have been overlooking; and we are chilled by the poem as much as by our recognition of our own negligence. Linda Puffer’s “Circle of Bones” is an example of this, showing us our race as a continuous bridge of backbones, a bridge that leads in all directions of human experience; the dream strategy here is chant, incantation, and the result is a spell in which we share the poet’s vision, moving from individual to generic consciousness as the spell ends and we re-emerge from dream to waking. So the dreamlike strategies of indirect discourse attenuate the impression of narrative lucidity (which, despite the optical metaphor, does not accurately mirror the complexities of life) and can lend to narrative the depth of reality and myth. In this way, narrative becomes a successful imitation in Aristotle’s sense, showing us not merely things that are or were, but what we want most to see, things that might be or could be (Aristotle, p. 1464).

“Was it a vision, or a waking dream? Fled is that music,—Do I wake or sleep?” Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale” holds our attention precisely because we don’t know where we are in it. Surface, direct discourse, can give us only hints of the depths of experience; but discourse becomes most inspiring when it freely gives those hints, and least invigorating when it avoids all “hints” in a determination to remain wholly logical and precise. As Unamuno says, “Dream abides. It is the only thing that abides. Vision abides.” There is no worse terror imaginable, as Allen Katzman’s poem declares, than to imagine an end to imagination:

IN 1935 WHEN THINGS GOT TOUGH

A DOOR IS OPEN

THERE IS NO VOICE
THERE IS NO IMAGE
THERE IS NO VISION

Wasiolek puts it this way:

In dreamwork spatial relations like contiguity, succession, transformations and order take the place of such logical relations as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and either-or relations. Both dream and art seem to be a re-translation of a world sorted out by logic back into a more primitive mode of apprehension and perhaps a fuller apprehension of the world’s body. (pp. 158–159)

Among the greatest contemporary practitioners of the dreamlike strategies is Gabriel García Márquez, whose expansion of Borges’ metaphor of the parallel mirrors, in Cien años de soledad, is the dream of the infinite rooms of José Arcadio Buendía. Stanislaw Lem’s Solaris includes within the scope of its narrative every conceivable form of dreamlike phenomena (copies, hallucinations, delirium, drugs, intoxication, daydreams, memories, reveries, meditation, chimeras, trance, mirror
images, incubi, mirages, trance, ghosts, doubles) to remind us how close to infinite are things imaginable, how many more numerous are the obscure forms than the local shapes of the limited surface world. Hubert Selby's *Requiem for a Dream* includes a marvelous scene in which Sara Goldfarb, under the influence of amphetamines prescribed for her diet, loses all ability to distinguish between the image-screen of her television set and that of her own mind. She sees herself walking across the television stage and, before long, the projective process is reversed as announcer, audience, and technicians trailing cables, walk through her apartment disapproving of its rundown condition. (The Summer 1981 issue of *Dreamworks*, "Dream and Fiction," will be devoted entirely to the use of dream in novels and short stories.)

More directly than my previous examples, this one brings to mind the state of imagination in the present time. On the one hand, we seem once again ready to accept that poets have created the cave of imagination and that the question of its reality, of its "real" existence, is answered by pointing to the library of poetry: if the imagined cave is only a poetic projection, it is nonetheless (and, by some arguments, all the more) real for being so. On the other hand, contemporary psychology seems on the verge of accepting a holistic view of the psyche, including imagination. Our consciousness need no longer be analytically subdivided into post-Freudian excessively rationalistic categories (conscious, subconscious, un-, pre-, and semi-conscious) without physiological basis—as useful as these subdivisions may have been for awhile. (Clayton Eshleman's comment in this issue implies a distinction between dream and imagination, associating the latter with the waking will directing images into intended patterns. My preference is to use the term "imagination" in a broader sense; in this sense imagination includes, indeed starts with, dream, its psychological and neurophysiological origins.) To be human is to be aware. Period. Are we not aware when we are asleep and dreaming? Contemporary brain research, especially the work of William Dement and of Robert W. McCarley and J. Allan Hobson, has made it clear that we are perceptive, active, and inventive while we are asleep. The sheer energy that freely identifies one experience and one mode of imagery with another, as in the puns of Lawrence P. Spingarn's adaptation in this issue or the mysterious symbolic language of Eshleman's "Atlenmetheneira" (recalling Fellini's "ASA NISI MASA" from 8½) is all the "proof" we need. Such untranslatable dream inventions (see also, in this issue, the dreamed puns in Denise Levertov's appendix) may even be considered the most serious products of imagination we have access to—precisely because of their irreducible purity, which makes the puns into a kind of self-sufficient verbal music. There are no sharp or natural divisions except those we invent and, in times of waking absent-mindedness, believe in as though they were autonomous forces. As John Hollander argues, the the interface only appears to exist. We can't put our finger on the "border of our two countries." It is a "fable not of the sea of figure as opposed to the literal shore, but of a division made at right angles to the coast-line, as it were, by which what lay on either side of the boundary would look identical."

What are we are of? Images. And the imagination, as Aristotle understood it (*fontasia*), is the name we give to that contraption which processes these images, copes with them, controls them, delights in them:

Try to remember this: what you project
Is what you will perceive; what you perceive
With any passion, be it love or terror,
May take on whims and powers of its own.

(Wilbur, p. 107)

The contraption remembers images, fictionalizes them, dreams them, hallucinates them, prophesies them, senses them, juxtaposes them in patterns not found in the

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fabric of "external" or "empirical" or "waking" or "prosaic" reality but patterns nonetheless real (and in many cases, good and bad, in our history, even more real) for being mysteriously unprecedented and surprisingly mysterious and native only to the human mind. The imagination analyzes images, isolating their (sometimes imagined) discrete components, as when Ortega y Gasset speaks of the unique beauty of a faded color, or when Mark McCloskey or Virginia Brady Young speak of color as a discrete image which their vision recognizes and reassembles: "Pain flows into yellow, yellow blends with blue."

The imagination projects the images on our internal screen, marvelously described by Richard Wilbur's closing lines, as "a pool/ On whose calm face all images whatever/ Lay clear, unfathomed, taken as they came." Taking them on its face, that pool reshapes the images in its depths (whether we consider those depths in neurophysiological, mythic, religious, psychological, or "mysterious" terms). The images, as we kneel "at the well-curb" (of Frost's poem, "For Once, Then, Something") come into focus and, at that moment of introspective attention, on the farthest wall of the cave, what we see, according to Dante, is our own face:

That revolving action that seemed...
To be conceived in you as a reflected light,
Looked as if it were painted, inside itself,
In its own color, with our effigy...

(Paradiso, 33.127–132, trans. Luigi Biancolli)

Edited on the internal creative screen, the images are then projected by the imagination outward onto the screens of others. The imagination perceives the effects of the transmission on those who receive it, receives image-signals back from the receivers (who are also senders): the revised images of ourselves which are, as poets and philosophers have argued, often more important to us than our internally projected and received self-images (if indeed it is possible to shape an image "on the inside" alone).

Joyce Carol Oates (p. 123) suggests that one of the most important functions of imagination is to build rationalizations by which we survive our pain from day to day, even changing good to evil: "My sickness was in fact their survival and nourishment." Dream has the freedom unknown in waking life to change death to life through the simple imaginative process of juxtaposition and merging—as in Gary Snyder's poem where the dead bird turns into a woman who walks with the narrator "down a dim-lighted stairway/ holding hands, walking more and more swiftly/ through an enormous maze, all underground." The circle never ends, only enlarges; and the circle is never a straight line:

The circle grows larger
out into the street, sidewalks
of inexhaustible content which hold in it
infinite rays of light and swallow
all the multiplicities there are
in the world. (Katzman, p. 127)

"As long as you go on," says Samuel Hazo's poem (this issue), "so does the game." Or as Gary Snyder has it, the "movie" is "always running inside us."

Ruth Dagon's "Catch Me Someone" shows us that the circling imagination of dream takes us, not just down, but back, into the past. In the dream cave of imagination, memory and wish (Marcel says hope is a memory of the future) find each other. Their marriage, consecrated by the poet's daring to open her mouth and speak immediately upon returning, issues in poetry:
Years rush up to meet me.
Friends call from upper storeys.
I plunge past men
With eyes turned inward,
women self-contained as cactus,
children sticky with alphabet parings.

Here, as in Oates’ and Kate Braverman’s poems, the cave is identified with both the body and the city’s buildings, as containers of multiplicity. The practice of poetic-speech—after—dream—which René Magritte called “self-willed dream”—eventually allows the practitioner, as Levertov implies in her essay, to reenter the dreamtime (to use the Australian term) automatically in the creating of poetry. Some poets represented in this issue speak of being dictated to by the dream; Karl Patten writes: “The experience was an exhilarating one, and it convinced me that the notion of the poet as the vehicle of the muse is a true one, not romantic balderdash.” Ursula LeGuin suggests it is a form of possession (“by the Daemon”) that occurred when she was “keyed up” (the idea of ecstasy induced by intense creative action is as old as the Greeks and as contemporary as clinical studies conducted at UCLA under the impetus of Norman Cousins).

Both Patten and LeGuin resist the concept of automatic writing because it suggests the creative volition is not their own. An alternative explanation for the poet’s fluid transcription of his vision into verse that allows us to share it is his ability and confidence to reenter the dream cave, the place of contact with imagination, by opening his mouth, by beginning to write—without knowing what will come next. The poet, then, is someone who, through practice or even habit, has easy access to the other worlds. “I make no distinction,” Braverman writes, “between dream and reality.”

Memory also dreams; and the dreams of memory are what we call fiction and poetry. McCloskey explains the relationship between dream and memory this way: “I suspect that a dream...is the poem that memory on some irreducible level of frustration makes in the body when the power of choice and discrimination goes to sleep.” If the poet remembers memory’s poem when he awakens he may shape from it another poem that becomes a part of recorded memory. As the circle widens, our individual memory fixes recalled dreams, and dreams reported or fictionalized by others, in our imaginations where they become integral parts of our evolving identities. (At the same time, poetized memory, poems adapted from dreams, become part of our historical, collective mind—the public dreams Campbell speaks of.) We will always have a contemporary literature, which reflects our imagination like a mirror, whatever direction it is turned. We find images everywhere. After all, as Faulkner reminds us—“There is no such thing as was; if was existed, there would be no grief or sorrow.”—distinctions between one time and another are also arbitrary impositions with no commanding hold upon the continuum of reality as our full consciousness experiences it, whether dreaming freely, awake and looking through the cleansed windows of perception, or anywhere in between.

What is the relationship between what we remember and fictionalize and what we perceive and objectively know? Only that what we perceive is always, as Heraclitus stated long ago, changing; and thereby denying us the stability psychological identity demands. Memory, imagination, dream also change, yet much more gradually. The process of their changing produces our enduring identities for us, the ones by and with which we live from day to day and from year to year, as they fictionalize our perceptions, revising them so they can be involved in the imagination of others. The imagination is not a moral but a poetic force, offering us not imperatives or taboos but merely choices; it presents us with images, possible and fantastic, and our waking mind chooses those images it needs to live with.
Today, more than ever before, we are bombarded with images from the world around us, and therefore from our own imagination; and we need the bombardment because we have more choices to make than ever before, and more unprecedented choices. Neruda said, "there is no insurmountable solitude," and we work toward surmounting the destructive solitudes that can affect our future by communicating and sharing our dreams. We partake of the poet's dream by allowing our imagination to follow his or her directions back to the cave—especially following indirections.

NOTES

1. Amory associates horn with "unmistakable truth," ivory with "unrecognized truth."
4. In the matter of saying what one imagines and imagining what one says, I might refer to Michel Foucault's famous statement, in The Order of Things (New York, 1970): "It is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say" (p. 9). Although Foucault accurately describes the relationship between perception and linear (surface) discourse, I would argue that his statement has no truth value with regard to indirect poetic discourse in which depth is communicated in what Borges calls the "interstices" between words or lines.

REFERENCES
