

[*10] That is especially so in personal and intimate relationships, where our inner worlds interact and interface more like swirling waves on water than fixed “plots.” I’ve written about this previously in *In Dreams*, where I critique both the concept and the possibility of a full “understanding” of another animate essence in our universe. My argument includes a detailed examination of “misunderstanding,” concluding that the presumption of full understanding, of ourselves or others, is by definition a misunderstanding. Given this, the worthiest quest is, as many philosophers and poets have suggested, an ongoing, lifelong process of attempting to “know” oneself, an always unfinalizable quest. In doing that, one can, I believe, counterintuitively, come to know everything else out there much more truly than is possible under the aegis of a presumed, externally imposed, “understanding.” The application here is obvious: Cults and conspiracy theories purport to be conclusive “understandings” of otherwise mysterious situations or events. And they are, therefore, from my point of view, bogus by definition.