

Lucid Dreams & Consciousness

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Dreams are an archetypal experience of the contact modalities because they are an experience available to nearly everyone. They provide experiences of pure consciousness that can transcend the bounds of space, time, and matter. In this chapter, I observe the similarity of nightly dreams, daydreams, and hypnotic dreams, which I will simply refer to as “dreams”.

Dreams are similar to other states of consciousness associated with the contact modalities, such as out of body experience, visitation of ghosts/spirits, encounters with ETs and UFO/UAPs, telepathy, remote viewing, and precognition. Practicing lucid dreaming may provide insight necessary for conscious development and even control of experimental variables for exploring the contact modalities.

The study of dreams from a post-materialist and consciousness-primary point of view necessarily involves subjective dream reports recorded from the dreamer upon waking or after. While there is discussion about the validity of dream reports, especially involving hypnosis, there are reasons to not be skeptical. Experiences of the other contact modalities, such as encounters with ETs or UFOs, are often misidentified as dreams. Therefore, we can expect to find meaning in the contents of dream reports, but conclusions about the objective world may involve a process of interpretation.

The future of dream study and, perhaps, the experimental exploration of the contact modalities, may involve a large database of first-person reports of dream-like experiences. The contents of the reports may be quantitatively analyzed and compared using computational processes that do not rely upon human interpretation. Use of a content coding system adapted from the Hall/Van de Castle system allows for the comparison of the reports with well-defined academic dream databases and dream content studies. There are promising efforts to use algorithms to perform computational content analysis on large datasets.

In conclusion, I envision a citizen science platform to collect reports of contact and dreams, coordinate experiments through lucid dream intention instructions and other

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means, and to invite deeper study of consciousness through individual and collective participation in dream exploration and research.

Studying Dreams Invites Participation - My Personal Perspective

Based on my experience as both a dreamer and a dream practitioner, I am compelled to acknowledge that the study of dreams invites participation with the whole self, not just the intellect. Further, I understand that the researcher must participate in the path of dreaming for true meaning to arise from the effort of research. While it is not a scientific understanding, I acknowledge that my capacity to serve others in their dream practice in some way depends on my own dream practice. All of my personal and professional dream experiences directly respond to intentions I put forward for healing, insight, transformation, and contact.

I have often wondered why massive efforts to collect and analyze dream reports fall short of their ambitions. Since I was inspired to work with this vision in 2008, I have seen multiple promising dream journal web applications start up and shut down. In 2015, Rebecca Lemov published her book, Database of Dreams: The Lost Quest to Catalog Humanity, which chronicled a large-scale failed attempt in the 1950s to collect dream reports.

When I first started my hypnosis and dream-work practice, I observed deep synchronicity with my clients. In order to be present with their healing and insight, I needed to go on an inner journey of healing and insight for myself as well. My life was transformed, even as I invited others to transform their lives through dream and hypnosis practices.

It is my opinion that large-scale efforts to collect and analyze dream reports fail because the researchers are not participating in their research at the deepest level. As a psycho-spiritual practitioner I know that dreams lead to healing, insight, transformation, and contact. Therefore, I expect that the large-scale collection of dream reports will lead to large-scale healing, insight, transformation, and contact at a collective level.

Two Stories About Dreams

In the spring of 2021, my family and I explored CE-5 and other contact modalities. While I had been practicing with dreams and contact for nearly two decades, several potent experiences arose that spring that I would like to share as examples of the interrelatedness of the contact modalities and dreaming.

The Pleiadian Stupa in the Clouds

One early morning, I went for a walk. I looked up to see a flash in the clouds. I experienced what felt like a telepathic connection with something that appeared to be in the clouds, just above the mountains, and that looked like a mothership to my mind's eye. Information was communicated regarding the nature of dreams and technology, particularly related to experiences I have had regarding Buddhist Stupas (sculptural representations of the Buddha). I asked for physical confirmation of the encounter, and after that the light and form disappeared.

Somewhat disappointed, and not sure how to interpret the experience, I continued my walk home. As soon as I got back, my wife said that she'd had the most incredible dream. She dreamed of a huge statue on top of a mountain and that she was in school. The teachers were ETs and characters from Star Trek, and the statue was in some ways a ship and also like a Buddha.

The information I received was that dreams and consciousness are in some way primary technologies of contact. I learned that the physical expression of these phenomena is important, but that the experience of consciousness, archetypally expressed as dream, is the primary mode of the ET/ED (extra-terrestrial/dimensional) technologies we see in contact experiences. The confirmation through my wife's dream had sufficient gravity that my whole self-integrated this knowledge.

It is important to note that I have seen many physical appearances of UFO/UAPs and initiated dozens of contact experiences through my dreams up to this point. I needed the experience of confirmation through another's dream to feel at peace with this knowledge. I am not claiming that an ET ship visited us both; I *am*, however, claiming that my personal journey of integrating the consciousness-primary worldview implied by these phenomena finally climaxed through the synchronicity of my wife's dream and my dream-like experience in a way that is personally meaningful to me.

The Beings from the Portal

One afternoon in the spring of 2021, I arrived home. My 10 year-old son said, "I just had the most incredible experience of my life!!! A rabbit sat next to me, then it jumped on my head, and ran onto a tree branch and off into the woods!"

My heart immediately sank because I intuited what happened. He went walking into the area of the woods I called "the portal". This is an area that makes your hair stand on end. It feels as if the veil is thin. We have seen lights come out of the area, seen and felt presences, heard dozens of owls, and experienced inexplicable movement of objects in the area. Part of me was scared of these things and so I encouraged my family to stay away.

At that moment, I knew that my son had gone up there and had a contact experience all alone. I asked him to describe the experience and show me where it happened. He took me straight to the center of that area I called “the portal” and described the encounter just like that: a rabbit that sat next to him, jumped on his head, then ran off into a tree.

However, he was unable to find the tree. We found the log he sat on and he pointed to where the rabbit came, but we could not find the tree. Neither of us doubted he had a powerful experience, but he was confused by the experience. He took an hour or so to think about it, then came back to me and said, “I know what happened! It was a lucid dream!” He used the concept of lucid dreaming to make sense of and to integrate his extraordinary experience of contact. He has not since expressed confusion about the rabbit, nor has he observed that lucid dreams generally arise out of a sleeping, not waking, state of consciousness.

In his use of dreaming as a stand-in or symbol for contact experience, he is very similar to some my clients who seek regression hypnosis for missing time. They often report dream-like experiences surrounding the missing time episode. I believe that many of us have experiences like my son and his daytime lucid dream. We have contact experiences, but we don’t know how to explain them, so our minds provide the closest pattern of interpretation, which is dreaming.

Dreams as a Contact Modality

Dreams are deeply related with all the contact modalities. They involve visitation of spirits or ETs, spontaneous healings, out-of-body experiences, telepathy, and precognition. Dreaming can be considered as a loosely defined state of consciousness that is experienced on a spectrum from daydreams to night dreams. Dreaming involves exotic states of consciousness like sleep paralysis, ESP, and lucidity while dreaming. Lucid dream practices invite personal experience of contact and methods for collective exploration of consciousness.

Nocturnal Dreams, Daydreams, and Hypnotic Dreams are Related

There are observable similarities between daydreams, hypnotic dreams, and nocturnal dreams. Levin and Young (2002) observed a strong linear relationship between waking-fantasy measures and the phenomenological qualities of dreaming in their study of 288 non-clinical study participants. Their measures of waking-fantasy included fantasy-proneness, absorption, and positive-constructive daydreaming. Interestingly, one of their measures included assessments for heightened sensory-perception experiences such as out-of-body experience, drug-induced states of altered consciousness, and episodes of dissociation, which they found to significantly predict dream salience and recall.

Looking to dream content, Deirdre Barrett (1979) observed an almost linear spectrum from daydream, through light-trance hypnotic dreams, then deep-trance hypnotic dreams, and to nocturnal dreams. Barrett's study drew upon data collected from a sample of 16 undergraduate students. The content measures included emotional themes, characters, length of report, settings, and logical distortions.

A sleep laboratory study involving 31 participants by Blagrove et al. (2019) showed the relationship between daydreams, non-REM, and REM dreams. They found that discussions of daydreams and nocturnal dreams are equally engaging and thorough. Discussion of these dreams yielded observable insights into the participants' lives, which was measured by an Exploration-Insight rating. These are insights that might provide a source of problem solving and personal growth. The study found that all types of dreams yielded insight, and that discussion of nocturnal dreams yielded higher Exploration-Insight ratings than discussion of daydreams.

Dreams are Similar to Psychedelic States

Rainer Kraehenmann (2017), in a review article, observed the similarity of dreams to psychedelic states. The observed similarities included perception, mental imagery, emotional activation, and cognition. The differences included perceptual relation to environment, clarity of consciousness and meta-cognitive abilities. Kraehenmann considered lucid dreaming as a hybrid state of wakefulness and dreams, observing that the psychedelic state more closely resembles lucid dreaming than other types of dreams.

Dreams Exhibit Non-Local and Paranormal Qualities Associated with the Contact Modalities

There are several studies and reviews in the literature that observe the non-local and sometimes bizarre or paranormal qualities, which we may associate with the contact modalities, in dream reports.

Krippner and Faith (2001) performed a cross-cultural survey of 1,666 dream reports and found that 8.1% of those reports could be rated as an exotic dream. They define an exotic dream as including: creative dreams, lucid dreams, healing dreams, dreams within dreams, out-of-body dreams, telepathic dreams, mutual (and shared) dreams, clairvoyant dreams, precognitive dreams, past-life dreams, initiation dreams, and visitation dreams. 1.1% percent of the reports were rated as "visitation" dreams, which includes contact with a deceased person or encounter with an ET entity.

Sherwood and Roe (2003) provided a review of dream telepathy literature since the Maimonides dream ESP trials. These tests involved sending images to targets and

then rating the correspondence of the dream content with the sent image, similar to other ESP tests. They reported:

A meta-analysis of 450 Maimonides ESP trials (based upon the blind judges' data) found the overall success rate to be 63% (MCE = 50%) with odds of 75 million to 1 against achieving such a result by chance.

Watt, Vuillaume, and Wiseman (2015) pointed out that “approximately one third of people in the UK and US believe that they have experienced a precognitive dream.” They describe a basic dream precognition experiment design used in the Maimonides ESP trials:

The precognition studies involved waking participants after a period of REM sleep and asking them to describe their dreams. The goal was to dream about a ‘target’ (such as a themed slide and sound sequence) that they would see the following morning.

Mossbridge and Radin (2018) summarize their analysis of dream precognition studies:

In sum, two well-controlled studies with statistically significant findings, two well-controlled studies with nonsignificant findings, and four controlled studies with potential for information confusion that yielded non-statistically significant findings constitute too small a dataset from which to draw firm conclusions about whether dreams can reveal the content of upcoming unpredictable events.

Although it is not yet possible to draw conclusions, similar to other dream researchers, they call for more studies and larger sample sizes:

Thus far, we may conclude that these data are insufficient for drawing conclusions. To better assess whether dreams can reveal veridical information about truly unpredictable future events, what is needed are repeated studies performed across multiple laboratories. Those studies should ideally use the same controlled group study methods employed by Watt et al. (2015) with larger sample sizes and controls for self selection bias, or with controlled single participant methods.

Sleep Paralysis Experience May Be Related to the Contact Modalities

Sleep paralysis is a dissociative state related to REM sleep, often involving alleged hallucinations (Drinkwell, Denovan, and Dagnall, 2020). Drinkwell, Denovan, and Dagnall performed a study of 455 respondents to explore the relationship of sleep paralysis with paranormal belief and experience. They found, “paranormal experience

correlated with lucid dreaming, nightmares, and sleep paralysis, whereas paranormal belief related only to nightmares and sleep paralysis.”

In another study, McNally et al. (2004) associate 5 of their 10 study participants’ alien abduction experiences directly with sleep paralysis. They report that all 10 abductees experienced sleep paralysis at least once in their lives.

There appears to be a deep association of sleep paralysis and paranormal visitation. De Sá and Mota-Rolim (2016) observe that:

Interestingly, throughout human history, different peoples interpreted SP under a supernatural view. For example, Canadian Eskimos attribute SP to spells of shamans, who hinder the ability to move, and provoke hallucinations of a shapeless presence. In the Japanese tradition, SP is due to a vengeful spirit who suffocates his enemies while sleeping. In Nigerian culture, a female demon attacks during dreaming and provokes paralysis. A modern manifestation of SP is the report of "alien abductions", experienced as inability to move during awakening associated with visual hallucinations of aliens.

Lucid Dream Practices Can Be Used as an Experimental Method

Baird, Mota-Rolim, and Dresler (2020) provided a deep review of the cognitive neuroscience of lucid dreaming. They defined lucid dreaming as, ”the phenomenon of becoming aware of the fact that one is dreaming during ongoing sleep.”

Saunders, Roe, Smith, and Clegg performed a meta-analysis of 50 years of lucid dream research regarding the incidence of lucid dreaming. They report:

Our quality effects meta-analysis shows the proportion of individuals who have experienced at least one lucid dream in their lifetime is 55% and that 23% report experiencing lucid dreams once a month or more.

In a phenomenological study of lucid dreams of 684 respondents, Stumbrys, Erlacher, Johnson, and Schredl observe that:

The average lucid dream duration is about 14 minutes. Lucid dreamers are likely to be active in their lucid dreams and plan to accomplish different actions (e.g., flying, talking with dream characters, or having sex), yet they are not always able to remember or successfully execute their intentions (most often because of awakening or hindrances in the dream environment).

About a quarter of their respondents were able to successfully execute an intention in a lucid dream:

Lucid dreamers are able to recall their intentions in lucid dreams in only about half the cases, and less than half of such remembered intentions could be successfully executed, most often because of awakening or hindrances in the dream environment.

Stumbrys, Erlacher, Schädlich, and Schredl (2012) systematically reviewed 35 studies of lucid dream induction techniques and found that “none of the induction techniques were verified to induce lucid dreams reliably and consistently, although some of them look promising.”

They conclude the review with a recommendation that the most effective techniques, such as Tholey’s combined technique or MILD, should be further explored. Tholey’s combined technique involves elements of reflection and intention with auto-suggestions. They describe the MILD (mnemonic induction of lucid dreams) technique:

MILD technique, which requires to rehearse a dream before falling asleep and visualise becoming lucid while focusing on the intention to remember that one is dreaming, was the one most often tested empirically. It was applied in ten studies: nine field experiments and one sleep laboratory study.

Intent to Contact ET/UFO/UAPs Through Lucid Dreams Yields Related Dream Content

A recent study by Raduga, Shashkov, and Zhunusova explores an interesting hypothesis using lucid dreams from 152 volunteer participants:

Some studies suggest that in some such encounters, these phenomena could be related to dissociative REM sleep states, like lucid dreams (LDs), sleep paralysis (SP), and out-of-body experiences (OBEs). The present research focuses on the hypothesis that if some of AUEs [alien and UFO encounters] are indeed the products of REM sleep, then they could be deliberately emulated by LD practitioners.

It appears that the participants were successful in remembering and accomplishing their lucid intentions. The authors found that:

Of the volunteers, 114 (75%) were able to experience AUEs after one or more attempts. The results indicate that 61% of participants encountered alien-like creatures, 28% encountered UFOs, and 24% experienced fear or SP. Regarding

the successful cases, 20% were close to reality in terms of the absence of paradoxical dreamlike events

The authors conclude that bedtime encounters with ETs or UFO/UAPs may be nothing more than lucid dreams. They conclude:

The results of the present study show that bedtime AUEs can be deliberately emulated during REM sleep and can mimic reality. As such, ordinary people might spontaneously enter PSs [phase shift experience like lucid dream, OBE, sleep paralysis, etc], unintentionally have an AUE, and confuse it with reality. This might be the case every time an AUE starts during sleep or while in a state of relaxation. Extraterrestrial civilizations, if they exist, better escape seeing us from bedrooms, for not being confused with dreams.

Mutual Enactment Hypothesis Invites Reconsideration of Ontological Status of Lucid Dreams and Alleged Hallucinations Associated with Sleep Paralysis

The conclusion of the Raduga, Shashkov, and Zhunusova study of bedtime contact with ET or UFO/UAPs suggests that dreams are in some way ontologically invalid or fantastical. The ontological status of these lucid dream encounters and/or sleep paralysis hallucinations may come into question when we consider the phenomenon from a post-materialist perspective.

Esbjörn-Hargens puts forth a hypothesis to describe encounters with non-human intelligences. He describes the Mutual Enactment Hypothesis (MEH):

NHIs [non-human intelligences] are one of five major kinds of beings that contribute in mutually enacting ways to each other and the manifestation of the phenomena (i.e., UFO, anomalous, and paranormal occurrences). All five kinds of beings (i.e., humans, NHIs, earth lights, thought forms and archetypes) are influenced in numerous ways by electromagnetic energies. These five kinds of beings exist within an ontological matrix that includes at least three distinct axes/spectrums: stations (where did they originate and where are they currently located), sovereignty (how much free-will do they have), and substance (what types of matter/energy are their bodies made out of). A being's location on all three spectrums determines its ontological status.

Esbjörn-Hargens points out that “some beings can, under certain circumstances, shift their ontological station from one domain to another.” It seems we must reconsider the ontological status of sleep paralysis, hallucinations and lucid dream experience.

With this new perspective, we might understand that 75% of the participants of the Raduga, Shashkov, and Zhunusova study may have had ontologically meaningful interactions with non-human intelligences presenting as ET or UFO/UAPs.

The Study of Dream Reports - The Study of Dreams Requires Dream Reports

The subjective experience of dreaming must be studied through dream reports. Our entire system of studying the experience of dreaming from the point of view of consciousness involves asking the dreamer to tell the story of their experience.

Windt (2013), in her philosophic paper, discusses the skepticism surrounding dream reports and outlines the potential challenges in working with dream reports:

If first-person reports turned out to be systematically unreliable, or if phenomenal experience turned out to be too elusive to be cognitively accessible and hence reportable, this would threaten the possibility of scientific consciousness research altogether.

She discusses several skeptical perspectives regarding the trustworthiness of dream reports and identifies their philosophic, not empirical, origins:

If questions pertaining to the trustworthiness of dream reports are neither conceptual nor empirical, nor based on contradictory reports then—absent further alternatives—there is a creeping suspicion that the question of whether dream reports are trustworthy in principle might be a pseudo-problem, an artifact of a philosophical debate.

In a move hopeful for the study of consciousness and the contact modalities, she concludes that we may extend an anti-skeptical perspective to all first-person reports:

Because all of the discussed variants of skepticism about dream reporting generalize to skepticism about first-person reports, and because they all fail with respect to dreaming, related worries about first-person reports in general appear equally ungrounded.

Content Analysis is the Quantitative Study of Dream Content

The quantitative study of dream content involves a process called content analysis. Domhoff and Schneider (2008) introduce content analysis and the Hall/Van de Castle coding system, which is widely used in dream studies:

The Hall and Van de Castle coding system is an instance of the general methodology of content analysis, a quantitative approach to the search for

meaningful regularities in any kind of written text. It involves four steps: the creation of carefully defined categories; the tabulation of frequencies for the various elements in the text; the use of statistical transformations to change raw frequencies into usable data, and the comparison of findings with control groups or normative standards. In particular, we focus on 10 general empirical categories in the Hall and Van de Castle system that make it possible to classify every element that appears in a dream report (e.g., characters, social interactions, activities, misfortunes, emotions, settings, and objects).

After surveying existing dream content analysis studies, including home and laboratory dream reports, Domhoff and Schneider (2008) concluded:

The findings on dream content reported by a wide range of investigators using the Hall and Van de Castle coding system show that there are cultural, gender, and individual differences as well as more generic or universal dream elements discovered through comparisons of dream reports from a wide range of cultures.

Computational Analysis of Dream Reports Yields Meaningful Conclusions

The content analysis of dreams usually involves multiple independent researchers rating each report according to the content analysis system. The use of individual human coders leads to discussions about inter-rater reliability and presents obvious time and labor considerations for the analysis of a large sample size.

Bulkeley (2009) offers a novel method using automated word searches adapted from the Hall/Van de Castle categories. The word search method is computational and does not rely on the labor of an individual rater. His study of normative dream data points to a basic compatibility with the Hall/Van de Castle system and therefore the existing dream content analysis literature.

In 2019, McNamara, Duffy-Deno, and Marsh developed an AI algorithm to perform content analysis that builds on the sequential work of Hall/Van de Castle, Domhoff, and Bulkeley on the methods of content analysis of dreams. Their system is based on a large corpus of dream reports collected through a web application along with basic dreamer data, consisting of 35,000 dream reports. It appears to be a promising method of analyzing the millions of dream reports posted on the public web or collected through online surveys to offer basic compatibility with nearly a century of dream content analysis literature.

Let's Dream Together: a Citizen Science Platform for the Study of Dreams and Contact

In this chapter, I have explored the similarity of dreams with other contact modalities. We see a connection between day, night, and hypnotic dreams. Dreams are similar to psychedelic journeys, visitation of spirits or ETs, and other exotic states of consciousness. Dreams appear to have non-local psi characteristics associated with telepathy and precognition.

Lucid dreaming offers a potent experimental means that works directly with the dreamer's intention and consciousness. Recent work demonstrates the ability of lucid dreaming to reproduce subjective experiences similar to ET or UFO visitation and sleep paralysis phenomenon. It is easy to imagine an online system to coordinate massive studies using lucid dream intention to explore consciousness, dream ESP, or to initiate peaceful contact with extraterrestrial/dimensional entities and/or non-human intelligences.

Like many other dream researchers, I call for larger sample sizes and a database of dream and contact reports. Over the last decade, I have seen my own attempts (as well attempts of other researchers and startups) at gathering a significantly large sample of dreams fall short for one reason or another. My personal perspective is that dream research requires participation based on respect for the individual dreamer and the psi aspects of dreaming.

In my personal practice, I understand dreams to be a means of healing, insight, transformation, and contact that responds directly to conscious intention. All those attempts at collecting the world's dreams seem to me to have failed for two reasons.

First, many dream reports have been collected and hidden away, often in the researcher's private collections, to be mined for publishable insights that do not directly benefit the dreamer. The sharing of dreams has specific cultural significance that often involves paranormal belief. For example, one might believe that sharing a specific dream with someone else might make the dream come true. I recommend that any attempt to collect a large database of dream or contact reports be based on the Open Data Commons legal framework, in order to support individual privacy and respect all participants.

Second, most dream researchers perform research under an objective or neutral perspective. It seems to me that most attempts to collect dream reports are based on the assumptions of western materialist science. In my personal dream practice, I understand that the study and exploration of dreams directly respond to positive intention. I recommend that the large-scale collection of dream and contact reports be based on shared intentions for collective healing, insight, transformation, and contact.

Working with many others through the Wisdom Age Metaverse 501c3, I am dreaming up a web-based application based on citizen science, the Open Data Commons legal framework, and open-source technology principles to collect and analyze reports of

dreams and contact experiences. The potential applications for this platform might include meteorological-like real-time reporting of the collective unconscious, precognition of future events, mass healing of cultural traumas, systematic mapping of the realms of consciousness beyond the physical, and initiating or deepening contact with ET/ED civilizations on a global scale.

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