

### **Part III: Empirical work**

#### **Introduction**

**STEPHEN LaBERGE**

*Stanford University, California*

"Experientia docet," asserts the proverb, but all experiences do not teach equally consistently. The scientific method of controlled observation and experimentation is designed to elicit reliable answers from the questions we put to nature. Part III contains a sample of the scientific research on lucid dreaming. Most of the empirical studies on the topic have focused on three major aspects of the phenomenon: induction, physiology, and individual differences; this selection is arranged accordingly.

Procedures for the induction of lucid dreaming are of obvious importance to the development of the field, given the rarity of spontaneous lucidity. The section begins with a panel discussion from the first annual meeting of the Lucidity Association outlining many of the basic approaches to the induction of lucid dreams. One of the most promising methods appears to be providing an external stimulus during REM, which if incorporated into the ongoing dream, can cue the dreamer into lucidity. LaBerge and Levitan describe the results of experiments with the DreamLight device based on this principle. Another promising induction method is based on the idea of giving post-hypnotic suggestions for lucidity. The first controlled study of this idea is reported in the article by Dane and Van de Castle.

It is easy to overlook the fact that claims of lucid dreamers of being conscious while asleep can sound impossibly paradoxical to many ears. Sleep laboratory studies have been important because they established that paradoxical or not, lucid dreaming is a reality. The next section surveys some of this laboratory research: studies of the physiology of lucid dreams (LaBerge and Brylowski), of the EEG alpha activity (Ogilvie et al.), and of REM density in TM subjects reporting witnessing (Meirsman).

Another major approach to understanding lucid dreaming is to study individual differences. Comparing the ways in which people who report lucid dreaming differ from those who do not might tell something about how lucid dreaming works. Reprinted here are papers on mental imagery (Blackmore), content and incidence (Gackenbach), and an account of teaching lucid dreaming to junior high school children (Armstrong-Hickey).