

Proceedings from the Second Annual Lucid Dreaming Symposium Concluding Comment

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I suspect we all share the impression of what a rich presentation we have had here today and what a wide range of approaches to lucid dreaming. Personally, I am delighted to see how this has been developing over the years. There has been more and more interest, and more people taking all sorts of different approaches, and I'm really looking forward to the next time we have a symposium like this and what answers we'll have to, for example, the fascinating questions raised in the ethics panel discussion. It seemed to me that we just don't know yet where the real pitfalls of lucid dreaming might be. We don't have any examples yet, with the possible exception of what Joe mentioned, of clear cases where people have been harmed by lucid dreams. But, perhaps it is possible, and we are going to have to find out whom it is good for and for whom it is not, how best to make use of it, and so on.

Obviously, there is a lot more that we're going to learn about the psychotherapeutic applications of lucid dreaming, once people start really applying it to nightmares, and collecting more cases of how lucid dreaming can facilitate the healing process. The work that Andrew is doing is very interesting. He just told me it was going to cost him a half a million dollars to do the rest of the study, so I hope he will be able to find some funding sources. Of course, the brain mapping we showed you was just one subject, only a few lucid dreams, and really just the beginning of the possible analyses. We are going to need a lot more data.

We're beginning to understand the content of lucid dreams in a more sophisticated way, beginning to notice that there are styles of lucid dreaming, different kinds of content. I'm sure we'll be hearing more about that. There are a number of unresolved questions that came up, for example, the question of dream sex, and why it is anecdotally so prominent, and yet doesn't show up in some of our dream samples.

I found the last presentation very intriguing. It showed a very different way of looking at perception. I think one of the questions we'll have to address is what kind of models we're using for understanding what a dream state is. I really wanted to ask Skip Alexander what kind of brain-mind model he had behind that nice diagram about the mind, whether or not God was in the brain, or prior to all brains, or whether the "state of unity" was a brain state, or a state in some other sphere. It's a similar sort of question to what Fred was asking; where is all this taking place? [gestures, indicating the environment] If something is "mixing", is it in the brain, or is it "projecting out" into physical reality or some other reality. I think we have to keep an open mind about that, because we don't know what the nature of the world is at all; our idea of physics is primitive.

I was also quite intrigued by the ideas of creative applications of lucid dreaming. I think we'll see more examples of this as people make more attempts at

it. Indeed, the "notorious" *OMNI* article that was mentioned earlier, "Controlling Your Dreams", has a benefit for research. Namely, we've gotten about a thousand questionnaires filled out by people answering such questions as, "Did you ever try to solve a problem in a dream? If so, what happened?" and, "Did you ever heal yourself in a dream?" and things like that. So, soon we will begin to have a clearer idea about what people have actually been able to do with their lucid dreams. Further, I think there is a step beyond that, since, of course, that's only what people have done so far. You all know that many of the boundaries that limit us are simply mental. What we think impossible we do not even attempt. This is sensible enough, when applied to the truly impossible. But you have all probably heard the example of the "four minute mile", and that when it wasn't thought possible to do, no one could do it, until one person succeeded, and then others found it wasn't a real limitation. I think we're going to discover that there are many more applications of lucid dreaming as we have more examples, as more people show how it's done, and this is part of the excitement of it all for me. Thank you all for your participation.