

Proceedings of the European Symposium on Lucid Dream Research Lucid Dreaming And The Evolution Of Human Consciousness

Olivier Clerc
Lanta, France

As soon as we start talking about dreams and lucid dreams mainly, the problem arises to know what we mean by *consciousness*. As we know now in psychology and in spirituality there are many different states of consciousness, and different names are being given to those various states. We can talk, for example, of unconsciousness, of subconsciousness, consciousness, self-consciousness and supra-consciousness. All those different states we can find in the same human being in different parts of his total being.

What we are interested in doing when we want to have lucid dreams is to bring self-consciousness in dreams. If you look at yourself, if you look at your dreams you will see that you are conscious in your dreams. You are conscious of what is going on, you are reacting to what's happening, you are doing lots of things, But you are not *self-conscious*. That means you are not conscious that you are conscious. You are not conscious you are dreaming until the time when you wake up and you say "Oh yes, I was dreaming." But that is too late. So what you are trying to do is to bring self-consciousness into the dream state.

Now what we see when we study consciousness, is that self-consciousness is related to the intellect. It is something that belongs mostly to mankind, to the human kingdom, and consciousness is more related to a level that is just below. In the esoteric tradition we say that consciousness belongs to animals, sub-consciousness to vegetables, and unconsciousness to minerals. And self-consciousness is something you find only in the human being: the capacity to reflect.

Self-consciousness means that you are conscious of being conscious: something is being emitted and then comes back to you. Some higher animals have the beginning of self-consciousness, but they mentally are not fully developed. They are not able to reflect and think in the way that we do on this.

Now the interesting thing is that consciousness has evolved in man. Take a child, for example, he is not conscious in the way you and I are at this time. His consciousness is very different. I won't go into too many explanations, that would lead us too far, and you can find that in various esoteric publications. But we see an evolution. We see that consciousness is very physical in the child, at the beginning, and then when he is growing, around the time of adolescence, his consciousness will grow more into the feelings, into the heart, with puberty. He will start to know feelings of love, hatred, and all that is related to that. And then only later on, around the age of twenty-one, to give an average date, we see the full expansion of the intellect and the mental part, and the full growth of self-consciousness.

When we are small, when we are children, our self-consciousness is quite limited. We are conscious of ourselves but not as clearly and precisely as we are when we grow up.

Now what we see is that the evolution of the human being from his childhood to his adult state is the same process as the evolution of mankind through the centuries. And if we look at man 2000 or 3000 years ago, his consciousness was not the one that he has today, and the intellect of man, for example, was not as fully developed as at this time. The development of science today and all the technology and all the wonderful things that science can do now is part of the evolution of mankind with the development of the intellect.

In past centuries man was much more linked with his heart, and all that has to do with feeling. Religion, for example, went into love and into worship and relating to other realities. If you look at history, you'll see that arts, for example, were much more developed than now - actually they're deviated - and the greatest musics, and the wonderful paintings and sculpture were all developed some centuries ago.

Now science has been the main point, the main focus of human work in general. So we see that consciousness is developing from centuries to centuries. What I suggest is that this evolution is not finished, and it will keep on going further and further. So if right now it is mostly the intellect which we are using, there are higher faculties in the human being that we can develop and that will give us something higher than self-consciousness.

In the eyes of the initiatic tradition this higher state is called supra-consciousness, a consciousness that is much wider. We are still very much conscious of ourselves, of our little self; we live in a world where our personal consciousness, our ego, is quite valued and precious. We have not yet developed the consciousness of the society, or of the environment to which we belong.

A mother, for example, has a wider consciousness than her own personal one. Her consciousness includes her family, children and husband. What happens to them is as important to her as what happens to herself. Her children's happiness may even be more important than her own. But often this consciousness stops at the gate of her house, and the neighbors are not included!

Supra-consciousness means a consciousness that includes more and more of our surroundings, things and people, until we reach the divine consciousness of the Whole. If consciousness is linked to our intellect, collective consciousness is rather linked with our solar-plexus. Through our solar plexus we can start feeling what others feel and live, and feel more concerned than we are when we see the world objectively, coldly, through the eyes of the intellect.

This is starting to come, and we hear more and more people talking about ecology, talking about space, fraternity, unity, and about a different way of seeing and understanding oneself, one's life and the whole world. And I think the more the years go on, the more this state of consciousness, this way of being, will keep developing and developing. So we are moving toward something else.

Now the interesting thing is that right now we start being interested in lucid dreams. And the point that I want to make - I'll say it right now and then explain how I come to that - is that *lucid dreaming will be the normal type of dreams for the more evolved human being*. That means that right now, we are self-conscious during the day, okay, pretty much more or less depending on what we are doing. And during the dream we are just

conscious: acting, reacting, forgetting our self-consciousness, our full capacity to think and make decisions. But later on if we develop a higher state of consciousness during the day, what we might call supra-consciousness, then in the dream we will have our self-consciousness, the consciousness that we do have right now in the waking state.

I started by working on lucid dreams, on trying to get the lucidity and self-consciousness in my dreams, and then I thought: "This is only a side impact, this is not the main thing." It is like when you eat: you get pleasure as a side effect. But if you eat only for pleasure you might ruin your health. Okay?

If you develop yourself totally, I mean your whole way of life, your way of working, feeling, thinking, if you change your state of consciousness during the waking life, you will see changes in you dream life. But the opposite is not always true. Changing your dream life will affect your daily life, but not as powerfully. If you treat the cause, you treat the symptoms. If you only treat the symptoms, you will not necessarily have an impact on the cause. If you are bald, you can draw hairs on your image in the mirror or on a picture...but you are still bald!

When I developed my first technique to induce lucid dreams - some of you already know that - I wrote a "C" on my hand, and every time I would see it I would remind myself to be fully conscious. Why? Because I observed that very often we *think* we are conscious, during the day, but actually we're not. We are also involved in what we do, think, or feel, our attention is so focused by one activity, that we forget all the rest: the room where we are, the building, the town, the other people, the time, and so on, and so on. So, every time I would look at my "C", I would take a "breath of consciousness", and remind myself of the whole context in which I happened to be. You know, it is like in the movies when you get really involved in the film, and suddenly you remember you're in a room, with friends - safe and secure - watching a story played by actors.

But then, working over the years, I could see that I could go much further than that. I thought that if dreams are just the shadow of our waking life - consciousness is not fully developed in them - then maybe *our waking life is also the shadow of a higher type of life*. And this is what most sacred writings of many religions say.

We can see ourselves first as spirit, or soul, or energy. And this energy is manifesting itself here on earth through a body. And what happens is that, in the same way as when you fall asleep you lose part of your consciousness and you tend to forget your real life and many things, in the same way when we come here on earth in this body we forget our true, spiritual and united reality. We do not remember where we come from, and we get fully involved in our personal existence. And only when we wake up, that is when we die to this existence, do we get back our full divine consciousness, and we say: "Oh oh, I got a bit too involved in that life!" This is an interesting analogy!

Maybe if we make a small picture it will be easier to understand (see Figure 1).

Self-consciousness is the normal state in which we are now. In the dream normally we would be here, in consciousness. This is below the normal state. Now what we are trying to do is to make a link (1) between those two so that part of it can come here. That when we dream we remember that we are linked with something outside, that we are just the shadow of something else.

Up here is supra-consciousness, where our spirit is. Now, if we manage to work in our waking life to get more and more in touch with our spirit, to try through various ways - meditation, yoga, prayer or whatever - to create a link (2) with our higher Self, and to bring into our daily reality supra-consciousness, Love, Wisdom, and all the qualities of our spirit, if we do this, we create a cliché, a habit that will also happen in our dreams: suddenly, we'll remember to make a link with something higher, and in that particular case, what is higher is our normal self-consciousness.

So what I started doing was this: in many situations I stop myself and remember that the problems in which I am involved or situations which seem so complicated and so important - and for which I am about to destroy harmony, peace and beauty - are just part of a play in which my spirit is involved.

Figure 1

SUPRACONSCIOUSNESS (spirit, unity)
 SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS (intellect, waking life)
 CONSCIOUSNESS (dreams)

Situations which seem frightening from the point of view of the dreamer make us smile when we wake up, and in a similar way we can learn to see things from a higher and wider point of view, with a new set of values: I can see others as important as myself and include them in my consciousness, so that their lives, problems, happiness and such are also mine. In this case I can discover new solutions to my own problems, solutions that will avoid violence, disharmony, division, hatred, etc.

If I keep creating that link and developing that higher state of consciousness while awake, then the habit of being linked with something higher will also appear in the dream state, and therefore lucidity happens more and more often. You see? And this is interesting, because a lot of spiritual teaching teaches you exactly that.

We can use another image. Look at a radio or a TV. You turn it on and you get a certain station. But we all know that the radio or TV is just receptive to an emitting station somewhere, maybe miles away. It is emissive towards us only because it is first receptive from the station. Well, the human being, according to spiritual traditions, is built in the same way. Our physical body is a receptor through which our spirit, soul, energy, life, or whatever you call it, is manifesting itself. But the channels are not clear, so the image is blurred and things get changed. So we're working on improving and improving the mechanism, the machine, until the result is perfect: the source and the image are exactly alike.

I suppose you all have read the Bible, in Genesis, where it says that God wanted to create man in his image and his resemblance. And a few lines later it says, "And God created man in his image, and in his image He created man." ...where is the resemblance? That's precisely what we're working on! Take the seed of an oak, it is made in the image of the oak, but it doesn't look like it at all. There is no resemblance. Okay, we all agree on that. In the same way we can say that man was made in the image

of God, or divinity, or Spirit, but the resemblance is not there. What we're working on is manifesting here more and more of the perfection, the qualities that are up there in the spirit. That's the whole work we're doing, clarifying the channel until one day we can have the perfection manifested here.

We have heard, or maybe met, some people, called saints, yogis, prophets and such, that have worked further on developing those qualities. What they are trying to do is to reach us to do the same thing, to develop a higher consciousness, so that we get more and more in touch with ourselves, and go beyond all the problems we face now.

Most of the problems we face come from the unilateral use of the intellect which separates and divides everything: "I'm here, you're there, we're different."

Now take two bottles of perfume. The bottles are totally separate and different. Maybe one is big, one is small, one is in a green glass, and the other transparent. You open the bottles, the perfumes go out and no one can say which comes from what bottle.

We can see human beings in the same way. You have a body, and I have another body, and we seem to be quite different. But on the other hand, we can see this as only one spirit or energy manifesting itself in different ways. Light, warmth and movement are all various manifestations of electricity. The evolution of mankind is going towards the consciousness of unity and Oneness. Intellect is just part of the illusion. It is a very powerful tool; it is wonderful, but that's not the end of human evolution. It is just one specific tool.

So the interesting thing is to work toward that evolution. Lucid dreaming, for me, has been a door. I was interested in many different things, psychology, spirituality, science and so on, and I discovered lucid dreaming and OOBEs, and this helped me to realize and to become aware of this evolution and to enlarge my interest into one thing - evolution, consciousness - that gathered them all. So actually lucid dreaming is not my main point of interest. I'm interested in seeing how we can help man evolve in a general way so that his life becomes better: his professional life, his relations with his friends, with his wife and children, with all life. Maybe by doing this he will get lucid dreams, and clairvoyance, and such, but those will be secondary effects.

Look for example at how people would do wars in the past centuries. Let's say I'm a general, and I'm going to take over that country. Now I'm not going to use my army and take over that town and then this one, and this other one, because after ten years I've taken only one tenth of the whole country, and lost much of my army! I go straight to the capital (caput = head) and I have the whole country. Okay? Why not do the same? Go to the main point, a higher consciousness, and then have all the side effects, wherever that consciousness is, in a dream or elsewhere. In this way we get a development that is much more harmonious.

If you play tennis you develop mostly one arm, certain muscles. There are other sports that develop usefully and in a more harmonious way the whole body.

So what I think would be interesting, when we teach people how to work with their dreams, is to give them this vision of evolution, or to encourage them to study the initiatic and spiritual literature. Tibetan buddhists have been working with lucid dreams for centuries, and they are not the only ones. We will go faster if we trust those that have

walked before us on the same path. Why make the same mistakes? Why lose time with problems whose solutions have been found and given long ago? Why do we accept teachers only in math, literature, sports, languages, but not in how to live a better life, how to be more conscious, more loving, wiser...?

I think that psychology has a lot to gain by becoming interested in the ancient and sacred teachings of all countries. Psychology has the point of view of the oak's seed, looking up and wondering what it's going to be like, and thinking it is going to be a big oak's seed. But man is not a big baby! Spirituality gives us the point of view of the mature oak, that knows both the nature of the seed and its own nature. Spirituality sees things from above: it knows that the seed came from the tree, and not from the ground. Psychology has gone deep in the roots, in the subconscious, but it hasn't yet found light, and it ignores the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, the higher states of consciousness: saints do not visit psychotherapists!

The study of human consciousness and all its various states - dreams, meditation, OOBes, etc. - is new and old at the same time. New, because it's only been a few decades since our modern sciences started studying it, with all of its technology and measuring devices; and old, ancient should we say, because if we look at past civilizations from all continents we find that they were quite experienced in that study and had even gone much further than we are now. We are being slowed down by our lack of trust in the knowledge of our ancestors and by our desperate need to see everything *objectively*, thereby forgetting that Truth is the result of the union of the objective and the subjective, of both points of view, the inside and the outside. Modern science has indeed developed an astonishing objective knowledge through wonderful methods and equipment; but people of the past had done the very same thing for our inner and subjective world, which they had explored in full length: they knew how to work with it, and how to obtain this or that result.

Now comes the time to unite both points of view, to unite science and religion, the Occident and the Orient, the intellect and the heart, the masculine and the feminine. Opposites cease to fight one against another when they realize that they can be complementary and thereby create children. Electricity and magnetism give movement, fire and water make steam. People like Fritjof Capra, O.M. A_vanhov, Jean Charon, David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake and many others show us that this union is possible, that it opens amazing research possibilities and it widens our understanding of the universe and of life.

Because of its very nature, the study of dreams is perfectly fit for this union of methods, subjective and objective. Let us not miss this opportunity. In the past five to seven years, I have observed a saddening change: less and less experiences, or limited and close-minded ones, and more and more statistics, numbers and figures. Let us beware of self-fulfilling prophecies: if we look at dreams in a limited way then we'll have a limited dream life.

Science needs water to be in a bucket to analyze it, but let's not take the bucket for the ocean. Let us keep an open mind, and an attitude of respect, awe, gratitude and wonder, and life will bless us with astonishing discoveries.