

Clinical and Spiritual Implications of Lucid Dreaming:

A Panel Discussion

HARRY HUNT

Today we are dealing with clinical and ethical implications of lucid dreaming, along with any possible contra-indications for lucidity. Our panelists are Alan Moffitt, Jayne Gackenbach, Eric Craig, Stephen LaBerge and Ken Kelzer. I will function as chair. We will keep everybody to an initial five minute basic statement, and then we can have discussions among ourselves and also input from the floor. By way of introduction, it seems that one can take lucidity in somewhat different directions. Certainly it can be taken as an experimental tool for the systematic observation of dreaming while it goes on, and has been so developed by Stephen LaBerge. We have seen that lucid dreaming can be a process pursued in its own right, one that may overlap with various meditative traditions. It is especially in the latter context that the question arises, whether there are clinical, dynamic, ethical complications or dilemmas that can develop in the context of highly intensified lucid dreaming? Can lucid dreaming to some extent go wrong for certain individuals?

We do have some context for this kind of discussion, from transpersonal psychology, the Jungian tradition, and the LSD research tradition. Current transpersonal psychology, in work by Wilbur, Engler, Epstein and others, is now increasingly trying to integrate psychoanalytic object relations theory with the idea of a developmental model of the spiritual path. Engler has suggested that one very common pitfall in developing meditators is that they can confuse aspects of what might also be called self pathology, including tendencies to grandiosity, with higher states. Ken Wilbur has suggested that at higher stages of meditative development these processes can themselves create certain spiritual crises that at least have a superficial resemblance to psychotic breaks and psychotic crises.

Jungian circles have come to similar conclusions, starting in the fifties and sixties in London. Increasingly Jungian analysts supplement archetypal analyses and individuation with the object relations tradition of Melanie Klein, Balint and Winnecott. Many Jungians now use these traditions alternatively, on the view that there isn't anybody, or almost anybody, in the West so spiritually advanced that they aren't going to get periodically caught up again in so-called transference or dynamic issues.

And finally of course the LSD research tradition of Stan Grof demonstrated that although one could debate about whether LSD states modeled mysticism or modeled psychosis, nonetheless, in those people for whom these states take a more spiritual direction, at certain points there will be crises of a more psychiatric or clinical kind occurring midway on the way towards integrative and transcendent states. So the transpersonal, Jungian, and LSD traditions show common dilemmas and cross-

overs between spirituality and dynamic conflicts, and it may be that lucid dreaming is now retracing some of these same issues. With such precedents perhaps we can avoid some earlier misunderstandings.

JAYNE GACKENBACH

I think Harry said it eloquently. I really can't stress this enough, all of us both in the panel and those working in the field, share a joy at dreaming lucidly as well as concerns. These range from methodological and research concerns to transpersonal and clinical concerns. We simply fall at different ends of the continuum, but we all have some concerns. As much as you may see disagreement in the field, I feel that there is unity as well.

ALAN MOFFITT

I am having trouble knowing where to start because I have so many disagreements with the direction lucidity and lucidity research has been going in. I find it difficult to know how to articulate that, but I will try. I have some very specific objections to both Steven LaBerge and to Charles Alexander and to some others. In Steven's book, he says that lucidity bears the same relationship to normal dreaming as enlightenment does to normal waking consciousness. I cannot express how profoundly I disagree with that position. I think in fact that it is an example of what Wilbur called the pre-trans fallacy, confusing something which is in fact relatively primitive with something that is in fact spiritually developed. That is what Charles Alexander says, in *Lucidity Letter* where he argues that those who dream lucidly are somehow more grown up (more developed). Chogyam Trungpa called such attitudes "spiritual materialism," and from my point of view that is the direction that lucid dream research has been going in. Spiritual materialism refers to the use of spiritual things for the enhancement of ego.

What I worry about in lucidity is that there are all kinds of terminological fallacies that go on in this area. Certain states are "higher", others are "lower". There is a developmental sequence that leads up. A number of things are wrong. First, mental states are not Euclidian, so high and low don't mean anything. Second, if you have a sequence that doesn't mean that you have a developmental sequence. Most people just grow older, they don't grow up. People in this area may be working on the wrong developmental model. If you talk about development, you have to talk about three things, not one. Development is not just concerned with growth. Growth simply means getting bigger. If you talk to someone who does developmental embryology they will tell you that development involves growth, morphogenesis (the development of form). and differentiation and hierarchical integration. I think it is extremely confusing to people to suggest that lucidity or witnessing automatically and necessarily lead to growth. They can also lead to depersonalization experiences. I think the lucidity and witnessing people are playing with dynamite, and I think it is essential that at the very least there should be the kind of warning that you have on cigarette packages—"Can be dangerous to your health."

There are also some hidden agendas to which I want to draw your attention, not as a scientist but as a humanist. The information I'm going to show you comes from the Maharishi International University. Now I don't know whether they still do this, but here is a glossy advertisement for their TM-Sidhi program. My understanding of a Sidhi is that it is a power. At points of maximum coherence in the EEG, it is claimed in this brochure, that one engages in what appears to me to be levitation. Now my objection to that is not scientific, I want to emphasize that I object to that on my own ethical, moral and spiritual grounds, because I think that is the wrong way to go. In Philip Kapleau's book, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, he quotes a seventh century AD. Zen Buddhist text, which says that on the path of meditation you may well in fact develop special powers or Sidhis: levitation, precognition, all kinds of things. The proper mental attitude which the ancient Japanese texts suggest, is "so what?" The Sidhis are at best only a rough index of where you are on the spiritual path. If you divert from the path that you are on into the exploration of those Sidhis, you've lost the path. You've missed it. If that is where you want to go, then I'm sorry, I just don't want to go along.

KEN KELZER

I appreciate what the previous speaker is bringing to our attention. As far as I can tell from my own personal experience, and that is where I speak mostly from, and from the limited experience of perhaps 20 to 25 lucid dreamers that I have worked with in my practice. I see two possible dangers in the cultivation of lucid dreaming. Actually I referred to both of them in my main presentation. One possible danger is that people may unintentionally awaken the Kundalini energy through the cultivation of lucid dreaming. Again I want to emphasize some people may experience this, but I do not think that every lucid dreamer will.

The second danger is what I call an inflation of the ego. I addressed this subject at length in my book. I used myself as my own primary guinea pig, when I talked about my own experiences of becoming inflated after I had experienced some profound and psychically moving lucid dreams. Looking back on my experiment with lucid dreaming there is no doubt that ego inflation happened to me, and at times, I can now see it happening to others. Recently, I have been talking about this subject at length with transpersonal psychologists and other professionals, and while I agree that a note of caution needs to be taken in line with what the previous speaker has said, I also think there is another potential trap that one could easily fall into in looking at the phenomenon of inflation of the ego. This potential trap is fear. In other words, if we fear something strongly enough, the fear itself becomes a trap. Inflation of the ego is a multi-edged sword. It is something that we can fall into because we desire our goals too strongly, or it is something we can fall into because we fear the inflation, or something else, too strongly.

After looking at my own experiences I decided that while the inflation was potentially harmful, I also began to realize that its arising was inevitable. There is something natural about this type of reaction that often accompanies some major change or development in one's life. Therefore I do not think that such inflation in most cases is a tragedy. I see it more as a "problematic opportunity". It is, I believe, primarily a process that accompanies a major life transition and in itself it can turn out to be either constructive or destructive to the overall well being of the individual. What I would like to suggest is that it is, ultimately, grist for the mill for another portion of the psycho-spiritual journey. When a person has a transcendent experience I think that he or she would be wise to start asking, "Am I developing inflation as a result of this experience?" Our best source of feedback to that question is to ask the people who know us best. Ask your spouse. Ask your close friends. Ask your colleagues. Ask your clients and students. If their feedback seems to be saying yes, then that gives us another direction in which to do our inner work. But I think it is a futile exercise to try to avoid inflation of the ego in advance. It can strike like lightning when it hits. One can know about it theoretically in advance and be forewarned, but if it strikes it will come from the unconscious, and we will still have to work with it. In the end it is just another avenue for psycho-spiritual growth in its own right, and it becomes simply one more form of grist for the mill. My impression is that Jung would certainly have agreed.

ERIC CRAIG

The perspective from which I would like to examine the clinical and spiritual implications of lucid dreaming is that of existential-phenomenology. This European-born philosophical perspective emphasizes a rigorous effort to understand the essence of human existence exactly as it presents itself to us in the fabric of our own lives as we live them from one day to another. As a systematic approach to understanding what it means to be a human being, including both pathological and transcendent possibilities for being human, it has also been called *daseinsanalysis* most notably by the controversial existence-philosopher, Martin Heidegger, and by two well-known Swiss psychiatrists who followed him, Medard Boss and Ludwig Binswanger. The concern of this approach is for preserving and appreciating the essence of being human precisely as it is given to us in human existence per se, as opposed to, for example, as it is given in theological or theoretical doctrine.

From this perspective what we always ask, first of all, is "What does it mean to be a human being?" Within the context of this answer, and with reference to our concerns in this present discussion, we then can ask "What does it mean for a human being to sleep and to dream?" In other words, the three questions which must be asked are as follows: What is it that makes a human being, a human being? What is it that makes sleeping, sleeping? What is it that makes dreaming, dreaming? Having answered these questions we can then follow with the suggestion that any human endeavor which threatens or endangers the essential structure or meaningful nature of these "things" - of being human, of sleeping

and of dreaming - must be viewed with some suspicion and exercised with considerable caution- Obviously we are not going to be able to answer all of these questions, much less identify the implications of these answers, in the short time we have today so we will have to settle with making a few comments, keeping the systematic pursuit of these problems for another occasion.

Given our limited time here, therefore, would like to focus particularly on the essential structure of human dreaming existence and on the implications of the study and practice of lucid dreaming for this unique mode of being human. Dreaming is, most essentially, a manner of existing which is taken up while we are asleep and which “overcomes” us as a spontaneous, precipitant and compelling openness to being in the world. It is a way of being conscious, of being “lit up,” if you will, of “Being-light,” into which we are thrown. Suddenly in the dark, still night we are unceremoniously cast into an illuminated witnessing which is not of our own choosing, which is given to us apparently independent of personal desire, intention or reason. Given this understanding of dreaming what then is the best manner for developing a knowledge of this unique manner of being in the world.

Clearly as human beings we always have the possibility for simply participating in our existence as it is given to us in either waking or dreaming. Naturally, we also have the possibility, which is crucial for lucid dreaming, for observing our participation, for being deliberately aware of the event of our conscious participation in life even as it happens. But in this latter possibility we are no longer “merely conscious” but rather we are, to some degree, “objectively conscious”. That is, we are establishing a distance, while in the very throes of experience between ourselves and our raw, unadulterated participation in life as such. In other words we are, to a certain extent, making an object of our conscious participation in our own existence. Naturally, with this possibility we are also given the possibility either for “letting things be” or for predicting and controlling the happening as which we exist.

This latter set of possibilities for objectification, prediction and control is what enables us to carry out scientific and technological projects, the project of the study and application of lucid dreaming being one of these. But we definitely always have both kinds of possibilities: our existential possibilities for simply being in the world and our more narrowly defined technological possibilities for objectifying, predicting and controlling personal and/or worldly events. The fact that we have these two different kinds of human possibilities, the latter being naturally subsumed as only one category of the former, presents no problem in itself. However, it can become problematic if we fall prey to the assumption that objectification, prediction and control are our most important manners of soliciting knowledge or of caring for things. With lucid dreaming this would mean that our dreams could become objects for the same kind of disregard that we have witnessed in many of our national forests, for example. Indeed, as I have said before, dreaming is one of the few remaining natural wilderness areas of human behavior. Our challenge is to learn

how we might best acquire and use our knowledge of this human territory and do so in a way that respects and conserves the essential nature and structure of dreaming as precipitant unpremeditated experience.

What is at stake?

With regard to sleeping there are two human possibilities at stake. One is the possibility of the significance of sleep as rest, as a way of “turning out the lights.” Sleep is a human being’s most intimate and immanent Sabbath, his or her own most hour of rest, relief, restoration, rejuvenation. When we are involved with dreaming “projects,” however, particularly with lucid dreaming projects, we never “turn out the lights,” we deny ourselves this most natural Sabbath of body and soul. Another possibility of sleep which is at stake in lucid dream study is the significance of sleep as “losing control” or as “letting go.” The original word for sleep actually means “hanging,” “falling,” “flabbiness,” “looseness.” We say we “fall” asleep for good reason: it fits the essential structure of sleep. If you have observed yourself going to sleep you may even have noticed (though surely the psychophysiological study of sleep also shows this) that your jaw can fall open, that your body can suddenly “let go” of or “lose” its muscle tone. It is this very “letting go,” this very “losing of control” which is threatened by the study of lucid dreaming where, at times, it seems if the entire object of the investigation is to demonstrate just how much control we may have over what was previously believed (at least in the mind of the so-called typical common-sense oriented westerner) to be beyond our control.

While I do not want to minimize this more ethical and philosophical concern that the study of lucid dreaming is a potential (though admittedly small and distant) threat to the essential nature of human sleeping, I do want to emphasize that these are not purely abstract ruminations. I believe there is a potentially significant clinical and pragmatic danger as well. For example, I was recently speaking with a new colleague who, when she learned of my interest in the study of dreams, spontaneously mentioned that she had had a rather disturbing experience a few weeks previous to our conversation. She told me that she had read Stephen LaBerge’s book, *Lucid Dreaming*, and, without any further preparation or support, had decided to do some lucid dream work with her own dreams. She said that this had been an extremely disruptive experience in her life in which she felt there was “no resting.” Her experimentation went on for approximately three weeks at which time she decided, in her own best interest, to terminate the project. She described this period as follows: “It was horrible. I no longer could get a whole night of good, uninterrupted sleep. I was feeling uneasy. The value of sleep was determined by my dreams, by remembering dreams and by accomplishing things in dreams. Sleep became a place to achieve something, to accomplish something and not a place to rest.” Now, while this is admittedly “only” the experience of one person, it still is the experience of one person and, therefore, a potential danger of which we must remain aware. Fortunately the person who spontaneously offered this anecdote is a relatively aware and resourceful individual. We would be well advised, therefore, to give serious thought to what might be

the potential hazards of such unsupervised experimentation, especially for those who are psychologically less “well-endowed.” I don’t pretend to have the answers to these particular questions but merely wish to suggest an alertness to these potential pitfalls on the part of those who are studying lucid dreaming,

Now, with regard to dreaming, there are also at least two human possibilities at stake in the study and application of lucid dreaming. The first of these is the possibility of dreaming as precipitant, unpremeditated experience. There are very few opportunities we have in the course of our lives to have our existence completely thrown at us, to have life explode around us, to be unexpectedly tossed plumb in the middle of an entirely uncontrolled cosmetic event. We can call this being cast into the world our “throwness.” And yet this throwness is only one of two fundamental characteristics of human existence of which we become aware when we think about what it means to be a human being. In addition to our throwness there is, in every moment of our existing, our project, our projecting ourselves back in response to the world into which we have been thrown, that is, our responding to the world by answering in the form of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. So there is our throwness, our being cast into the world, and there is our project, our response to that into which we have been thrown. While every moment of human existence has these two fundamental characteristics, dreaming is a mode of existing that emphasizes throwness. Our dreaming consistently reveals this characteristic throwness of human existence, allows us really to see the extent to which we are, in both dreaming and waking, cast out into a world which is not, most basically, of our own choosing. However, the deliberate premeditated study and application of lucid dreaming often attempts to undo this unique characteristic of dreaming experience by turning the throwness of dreaming into a project, thus diminishing such fundamental characteristics of sleeping and dreaming as falling, being out of control, or being thrown. Naturally there is nothing at all wrong with the learning value of projecting ourselves within our dreaming but if this characteristic of human existence is overemphasized and pursued to the exclusion of perceiving and understanding our fundamental throwness then our dreaming, as we have known it, may be threatened with extinction. The likelihood of this happening is extremely slight even in a single individual and certainly much less in the species as a whole. Never-the-less these are the kinds of potential outcomes to which one might want to attend if one sees oneself at all as a conservationist of human nature.

The second human possibility or human capability which is at stake with regard to dreaming is actually more serious and more urgent from a clinical point of view. What is often endangered in the study and application of lucid dreaming is the prior and more fundamental task of understanding the meaningfulness of dreams and, thereby, of coming to terms with just how things stand for us in our lives. Courageously understanding the meaningfulness of our dreaming existence involves nothing less than our own private confrontation with Truth. When lucid dreaming is taken up at the expense of such truth finding then we are undermining an extremely valuable resource for self understanding and

development. I see we are almost out of time but, again, let me offer one brief clinical anecdote to underscore the importance of this issue.

A high school psychology teacher, who had taught a unit on dreams, including the recent study of lucid dreams, had a sixteen-year-old female student who reported that she had had a dream about her father. In the dream her father was the captain of a ship which was in great danger of sinking in the middle of a storm. The dreamer was standing on the shore watching her father out at sea with waves battering the ship from every direction. Oddly, the father was standing in the bow of the ship, directing its course while completely oblivious to the seriousness of the storm and to the facts that the ship was about to sink and that he would drown. The dreamer was at first terrified but then, having recently studied lucid dreams, she suddenly realized that she was dreaming. Then she also realized that she could simply calm the storm, which she did and then woke up feeling just great. She was still euphoric when she told the story to her psychology teacher who responded with almost equal enthusiasm. When the teacher told me this story, however, I expressed my appreciation for this student's new found sense of competence and effectiveness in her dreams but then asked some further questions about her situation. Very soon it was revealed that she was a fine, very responsible student and person (almost excessively so) but that her father was a pretty heavy drinker, "probably even alcoholic" as the teacher added. Suddenly the import of this dream from a clinical point of view is far more serious. While the young person was permitted through her lucidity to gain an increased sense of her own competence, it should be asked if this was really necessary or even helpful in this case? Clearly neither she nor her teacher had dealt with the obvious dream danger to her father and its implications for both his and her waking existence. Nor certainly did either of them deal with the fact that this youth feels entirely responsible for rescuing the father while dreaming (a terrible burden, even when successful) and with what this might reveal or imply for her waking life. Surely we are now aware of what a typical and crippling pattern such rescuing and enabling is for children of alcoholics, a pattern which can persist and wreak havoc well into a person's adult life. Unfortunately, in this case, it seems that this young person's experience with lucidity was used to bolster her defenses against the awareness of these painful but important to see truths. The short term pleasure of lucidity and control in this instance came at the expense of essential, albeit disquieting, knowledge and self understanding.

STEPHEN LABERGE

I would like to say a few words about each of the statements made here. First of all, I very much agree with what Harry said about the problem of confusing self-pathology and emotionality with spirituality. This is certainly something that can happen with lucid dreaming as much as with anything else somebody follows believing it to be a spiritual path and this can be a source of a great deal of confusion. That is something we have to watch out for, certainly. With Jayne, I agree that amongst us in the lucid dreaming field there is general agreement.

I wish had time to deal with the specifics of everything Alan said here, but I would like to clarify a few points that bore on what Alan seems to think I have said. I want to clarify what I said about the relationship between lucid dreaming, ordinary dreaming, ordinary wakefulness as you are experiencing more or less now, and something that might be called enlightenment. I never have said, and I do not believe, that lucid dreaming is equivalent to enlightenment. I don't regard lucid dreaming as intrinsically spiritual in any way. It is something that could be used for spiritual purposes perhaps, but I do not regard it as a spiritual state. What I said in my book was that the experience of lucid dreaming is something that can show you how you could have another kind of awareness than the one you've got right now. In your ordinary dream state you think you are awake. You think this is real life. Then you get this new kind of awareness that radically transforms your experience, something added onto your normal level of consciousness in dreams. This new awareness is merely something that shows you how there could be something else beyond what we normally perceive in waking life. It doesn't say what that something else may be, and I do not intend to imply that it does. I also agree that lucid dreaming does not necessarily lead to growth, especially not right away. There are pitfalls. You can get stuck with lucid dreaming, making the wrong turns in that as well as any kind of dream work.

We should put into perspective all these concerns we may have about lucid dreaming in the context of similar concerns we ought to have about any dreamwork, especially dreamwork involving interpretation. We can have a whole symposium on the problems involved with interpreting our experience. I'm not sure that that's always the useful or valid thing to do, but that is not my concern. We haven't enough time.

As far as saying we should put warnings on lucid dreaming equivalent to cigarette warnings, let me show you the big difference. There is very strong evidence that smoking kills you. There is plenty of evidence on that. The only reason cigarettes are on the market is because of interests making money. However, we do not have anything like that kind of evidence for lucid dreaming being dangerous. I will agree that there are certainly people for which it could be dangerous. For those same people--anything will be dangerous. So I feel it is overstating the case to suggest we should put such a warning on lucid dreams. Moreover, I think you are likely to create more problems by telling people, "Now watch out because you could have problems with this."

I shall move on. I agree with Ken's emphasis on the importance of inflation, however, I would suggest another means of dealing with it. I dealt with this in my book where I presented an example of experiences I had in which I decided I was inflated. It was easy enough to realize this was so by reflecting when I woke up, "Well, how was I acting in that dream?" I was Superman, and I was telling everybody what to do, and it was clear to me that there was something wrong about the feeling aroused by behaving in this manner. I don't regard inflation as a problem that has to continue. It is something that when you see it happen, you can correct your approach, and say, "Well, I'm not treating

the other characters in the dream with respect, and not treating them on a level equal with me,” and alter your approach accordingly.

Finally, regarding some of the comments that Eric made - I think he was mainly concerned with losing two aspects of dreaming with lucidity. One was the meaning of dreams, and the second was the spontaneity of them. As far as the meaning of dreams, you can interpret lucid dreams just as much as you can non-lucid dreams. People tend to overemphasize their ideas about how deliberate lucid dreams are. Lucid dreamers are not constantly deliberately deciding the actions and events of the dream. It is not like that at all. In reality, there are moments in the lucid dream where you make choices that you may not make if you weren't lucid. More typically, however, in a lucid dream you are constantly responding to what comes up in the dream, and the unconscious mind is actually always bringing up new material that you have to deal with. So by no means is even a majority of a lucid dream being controlled. It is a much smaller piece than people would think. The same point applied to spontaneity is that there is plenty of room for spontaneity in a lucid dream. I see the question as more of one of flexibility. Being conscious allows you to be more flexible than not being conscious. Now spontaneity is part of flexibility. Now, if I can give an example of this: One of my lucid dreams that I have told many times--the one about the ogre where I realized I was dreaming and stopped struggling and then embraced him with love--illustrated the relative role of lucidity, because there is one point in there that I became lucid. I knew, “This is dreaming,” and I felt, “I’m going wrong. This is the wrong choice of action,” And then I changed my direction and said instead, “I’m going to go with the dream, I’m going to embrace this monster.” Then the rest of what happened in it was totally spontaneous. I don’t even remember what words I said. They just flowed out intuitively, because it is a matter of using lucidity at choice points, not continuously manipulating the dream. You need to have a light grasp on the dream. It is like saying, “Well, what is the best reaction I could have to this situation here.”

People can use lucid dreaming to avoid problems. They will fly away when they realize, “I’m dreaming, so I can get out of this situation and fly away.” But this tendency is also very easily corrected. As I did for myself. I had some dreams like that, but when I woke up I realized, “That’s stupid. Why should I want to fly away from my problems?” Instead I resolved that anytime I have a lucid dream, I’m going to look and see, is there any problem? If so, I’ll face it. Is there any conflict I can resolve? I stopped flying away just by having that one reflection in the waking state,

[EDITORS NOTE: The panel chair then asked Charles Alexander, of TM’s Maharishi International University, to come forward in order to reply to Moffitt’s comments about Alexander’s work and the TM-Sidhi program. Alexander’s collaborator, Jayne Gackenbach, offered to reply because Alexander was unable to be present.]

JAYNE GACKENBACH

This is an awkward position to be in, trying to speak for someone else [Charles “Skip” Alexander of Maharishi International University(MIU)]. Under most circumstances I wouldn’t. I knew about Alan’s feelings towards TM. We’ve talked about this for several years. One of the things that has hit me over and over again about my relationship with colleagues at the Maharishi International University is the misunderstandings about the Transcendental Meditation movement I have found among my scientist colleagues. I try to be reasonably critical and objective. However, I feel that there is considerable scientific as well as personal quality at MIU.

As to Alan’s first point, Skip and I have attempted to distinguish between dream lucidity and the phenomenon of witnessing. He has always felt reluctant to make claims about the developmental status of lucidity. However, Skip and I do feel that the stabilization of witnessing represents, according to standard developmental criteria, a more developed or “higher” stage. This perspective is not meant to imply that some people are better than others. Skip has edited the forthcoming *Higher Stages of Human Development: Perspectives on Adult Growth* from Oxford University Press. In the final chapter he details ten criteria for a major qualitative advance in adulthood and presents at length on conceptual and empirical grounds why the stabilized phenomena of witnessing represents a higher stage of human development, beyond ordinary conceptual thought.

Now I shall address Alan’s concerns about the TM-Sidhi program. As I understand it, the reason for the push on the Sidhi’s program is that the Sidhi’s program is the major source of the Maharishi Effect. The Maharishi Effect is a theory which states that when a critical mass of the population meditates together using especially the Sidhi’s techniques that the result is an increase in the quality of all of our lives. I recognize that sounds incredible. A more detailed explanation of the phenomenon is given by Robert Keith Wallace. John Fagan and David Pasco in a 1988 (2(1)) issue of *Modern Science, Vedic Science* (for a more detailed explanation than what follows see Orme-Johnson and Dillbeck’s article in Vol. 1, No. 2, 1987 issue of *Modern Science, Vedic Science*):

From the perspective of Maharishi’s Vedic Science, this state of ideal balance [of mind, body, and environment] is created by connecting the individual to the unified field of natural law in such a way that the state of perfect balance which maintains natural law is lively not only in the different homeostatic systems of the individual’s body but also in those of the social environment. The ultimate result of this process is to create ideal health for society.

In considering these mechanics we must first ask the question: is there a field of collective consciousness that underlies the orderliness and coherence of social behavior? [In 1976] Maharishi described the relationship between individual and collective consciousness:

Just as the consciousness of an individual determines the quality of his thought and behavior, so also there exists another type of consciousness for a society as a whole; a collective consciousness for each family, city, state, or nation, having its own reality and the possibility of growth. The quality of the collective consciousness of a society is a direct and sensitive reflection of the level of consciousness of its individual members.

Similar concepts of a collective consciousness underlying and influencing the structure of society have also been expressed by many great thinkers in the past. Collective consciousness, however, has never been studied in a serious scientific manner precisely because it could neither be isolated nor systematically experienced. The most sophisticated sociological theories at best give a vague description of a social field as an interlocking network of social and behavioral interactions within specific economic and environmental conditions.

With Maharishi's development of the Technology of the Unified Field, these ambiguities have been removed and the concept of a collective consciousness can and is being tested. The theory states that the collective consciousness of a society is more than the sum total of social interactions; it is a more fundamental reality. The underlying nature of collective consciousness, according to Maharishi, is the field of pure of consciousness, the unified field of natural law.

If such a field of consciousness exists, it should be possible to test it by measuring its field properties. Certain physical systems (e.g., lasers) exhibit properties such that if there is a subpopulation of a small number of coherent elements then the system undergoes a phase transition and begins to display macroscopic coherence, i.e., measurable coherence of the system as a whole. Applying this principle to society we might predict that if consciousness is indeed a field, a small coherent subpopulation of individuals could generate a more widespread coherent influence on the whole of society. This coherent influence could then be measured by changes in specific social indices, such as crime rate, economic indices, hospital admissions, and accidental rates. This approach has been undertaken in a number of studies.

Maharishi predicted a number of years ago that when as few as 1% of the population of a society practiced the TM program, a measurable improvement, such as a decrease in crime rate, would occur in the quality of life of that society. This effect has been observed in a number of different studies conducted in populations of various sizes. For example, in one study by Dillbeck, Landrith, and Orme-Johnson, crime rate trend in 48 different cities was analyzed over a 12-year period. The 24 experimental cities, defined by having 1% of the population practicing the TM program, showed a significant decrease in crime rate trend as compared to 24 control cities randomly selected from matched cities with similar

economic, educational, and other demographic characteristics. This decrease in crime rate trend in the “one percent” cities has been shown to be independent of such factors as police coverage, unemployment, prior crime trend, difference in age composition, and ethnic background. This field effect has been appropriately called the Maharishi Effect.

An even more powerful effect has been noted with the “group dynamics of consciousness,” the group practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi program. This effect, known as the Extended Maharishi Effect, or Super Radiance Effect, requires only the square root of 1% of a population practicing the TM-Sidhi program in groups to produce measurable effects such as reduction of violence and increased economic prosperity. Over 30 studies have documented the effectiveness of the Maharishi and Extended Maharishi Effect in improving the quality of life in numerous cities around the world [and even on a national and international scale]. The results of these studies cannot be accounted for unless one considers consciousness to be a field which is capable of transmitting effects over long distances. The discovery of these effects is of fundamental importance since it has profound implications for all areas of life. More than any underlying field of pure consciousness which can be directly experienced and influenced by the human nervous system (p. 46-47).

Two especially provocative recent time-series analytic studies suggest that during periods of large group practice of the TM-Sidhi program over a 2 1/4 year period, there were dramatic reductions in armed conflict (e.g., 71% reduction in war deaths) and increases in cooperative events in the war in Lebanon. One of these studies by Orme Johnson, Alexander, Davis et al. is appearing in the December 1988 issue of *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*,

Does this theory and its implications justify practice of the Sidhis and efforts to make it's potential efficacy widely known to the public? I feel it does. But that is a question I cannot answer for anyone else. I can only provide the information.

Questions and Answers

HARRY HUNT

The floor is now open to you for either questions to direct individually or collectively, or comments you may want to make.

Q: I want to direct this to Steve, to the extent that lucidity resembles a waking function or an uptake of awaking function, why would you expect the analogous situation? That is the lucidity experience during the waking state? Why wouldn't you expect that analogous situation to be an increase in dream content in the waking state?

LABERGE: Well, it sounds like you're being rabidly Jungian in your compensatory view of the relationship between dreaming and the waking state. If I believe that there is some relationship such as lucid dreaming is to non-lucid dreaming as enlightenment is to the waking state (in some respect). I am drawing an analogy of some kind. I'm not saying it is identical. That would suggest, by the way if that were true, that I'm claiming that lucid dreaming is enlightened dreaming. I don't say that. It is obviously more enlightened, with a small "e", than the usual kind of deluded dreaming where you believe things are happening that are not happening, or have different meanings--you believe it is literally happening in the physical world. So I believe there is a certain kind of "enlightenment". Now I do not suggest that it is even the same kind of enlightenment in the waking state. I don't really see any reason why one would expect more of dream content in the waking state, but I would say the one similarity is that my understanding of Enlightenment, with a big "E", is that it involves having a broader context, at least some other frame to put on experience. And that is what lucid dreaming does: it adds a new context, the observer level that stands outside the whole dream. It somehow says "Here I am. I'm in this dream, but this whole dream is in me too." And that gives it a perspective. Skip [Charles Alexander] was talking about the extreme case of that where one observes, and one sees it all happening down there.

Q: I agree. Alan very much with what you said, at least some of it. I think it would be better if we were very careful with the semantics. The idea of higher and lower I turns me off as well. In order to give up inflation of the ego, I think it would be better if we gave up the concept of ego. Why do you have to have the concept of ego? Why don't you just enjoy what you're living.

KELZER: The question was, in order to give up inflation of the ego, why don't we just give up the concept of ego? I certainly support joyful living. I think that joyful living and lucid dreaming are paths that people can pursue simultaneously. In order to give up inflation of the ego a person has to give up not so much the concept of the ego, but one's identification with the ego. One can retain the concept of the ego but still dis-identify oneself from an ego identity. Furthermore, if we really think we "can give up the concept of ego" we are deluding ourselves. We cannot give up (refuse to think about or face) the concept of ego any more than we can give up the concept of sand, airplanes, evil, or any other concept. I think this question contains an implicit fallacy, an impossible expectation, or simple misunderstanding.

I would like to say something about the concept of whether or not it is appropriate to talk about lucidity as a form of enlightenment, either metaphorically or literally. I think we have a tremendous problem here, in that we are failing into an unquestioned assumption. We are assuming that dream lucidity is a uniform phenomenon, that lucidity equals lucidity equals lucidity equals lucidity as we examine one lucid dream after another. What I think we need to remember is that in every lucid dream there will be

varying degrees of lucidity. I think we need to attempt to measure these degrees of lucidity in some way. I think at some point we are going to need some collective understanding that a “highly lucid,” lucid dream is distinct from an average lucid dream. This takes us into the framework of high and low, but if you do not like that framework, we can switch to another. We can talk about it instead using an expansion framework, and we can say that some lucid dreams are more expanded than others. We can then describe the differences between various lucid dreams in that way. We can talk about this range of lucidity using the high or low metaphor if we wish, or we can talk about it using a horizontal, expansion metaphor if we wish. There are many different metaphors available in our attempt to describe the phenomenon, but we need to remember that we are not dealing with a uniform phenomenon. There is a tremendous range to the lucidity scale in lucid dreams.

Q: Alan, you quite clearly set which way the lucid dreaming research shouldn't go. According to you, what way should it go or shouldn't it go on?

MOFFITT: Thank you for that question. The short answer is that I don't know, I have some ideas about that, and I have some ideas about where I think lucidity does fit in as a developmentally emergent phenomenon. I will be talking about some of those in greater detail on Saturday. But what I will be saying on Saturday is speculative. The more I get into this, the more I have questions rather than answers. I don't want to be a purist.

When we got into this business, we started talking about high and low frequency dream recallers. Sometimes when I talk about them I still do that. It is real easy to slip an evaluation framework into what you are talking about. My assumption was that people who dream frequently are closer to something that's really good, like bliss and enlightenment. I assumed as I think a lot of other people did, that if you didn't dream so much that wasn't so good. So we talked about low dream recallers and high dream recallers, and dropped out the word “frequency.” So “low” instead of becoming a term that refers to a number--which is clear and there is very little value implication in that--low becomes a place in space, or a place on a hierarchy, or a place on a movement towards continuum. The only thing I can say is I think we should be really careful about that kind of terminology with lucidity.

I think lucidity is at the very core of a whole bunch of really important developmental phenomena, but because it is that core it is an incredibly powerful phenomenon. One of the things that can happen to an individual when they experience lucidity is that they come upon an experience, which as I understand is the Tibetan Buddhists' view of what lucidity is about, of the radical impermanence of self and ego. I'm not even sure that the lucidity that Steve is talking about in his book has anything to do with Tibetan Buddhism at all. The source and origin of the dream yoga in Tibetan Buddhism is in the context of the six yogas of Naropa. You don't do one, you do all six, first. Second, when you practice the dream yoga, awareness is throughout the sleep cycle,

not just during dreams. So in that sense lucidity becomes more like witnessing. You do the three hours or more of Dumo meditation before you do the lucidity procedure Dumo meditation is a heat induction meditation. You are tested by how well you do the Dumo meditation by how many ice cold rags you can dry on the back of your back

This all suggests to me that the process of waking and sleeping and the induction of lucidity, in the context of Tibetan culture, is very much different than the kind of stuff that we're talking about here. In my own personal opinion, I'm not convinced at all that there is any similarity. I think I know what the Tibetans are on about when they are talking about lucidity, just because I read some of their texts. It is a preparation for death. The reason you practice lucid dreaming isn't to understand that everything is illusory--that's part of the trip--but the intuition of the radical impermanence of the self is primary. When I hear Steve say you get in touch with your true, your deep self--who's that? I admit that people use that kind of language, but I'm sorry I don't know what that is. I'm unenlightened. I don't have any trouble saying that, and I don't really know who I am deep inside when I get in touch with my true self, Maybe I should enroll in therapy. I don't mean to be disparaging of that other point of view. The reason I understand that the Tibetan Buddhists do it is that when you die and you go into something called the Bardo state, then lucidity is useful in that state because it serves in a process of reincarnation. Now I don't know whether you folks want to buy that or not. That is one of the places that lucidity can go in terms of the Tibetan framework. I don't know whether there is any analogy between what Steve is talking about at all and what he experiences and the Tibetan context. I'm not sure what kind of stuff goes in the North American context.

JILL GREGORY: This is for Eric Craig. I just wanted to bring up a small point about feeling thrown in non-lucid dreams versus being less thrown in a lucid dream. I would like to say that very often in my lucid dreams I am much more thrown. I let the dream experience go in deeper, more profoundly it moves through me. I'm more open and vulnerable to the moment, and I don't know what's coming. In a way I know a little bit what it's about but how intense it will be I don't know. So I disagree that there really is a distinction and that lucidity is necessarily less thrown.

ERIC SNYDER: This is for Ken Kelzer. I attended a lecture of yours several years ago, so you can correct me if you've changed your point of view. At that time you inferred that lucid dreaming, your development of it, was learning to manipulate your dreams consciously, to change the content, and, at that time, that lucid dreaming is the next stage of evolutionary development for human beings and that enlightenment for you was what I assumed to be the ability to manipulate your physical waking reality. Maybe I misunderstood it, but I got the impression that it was kind of a superman mentality, this idea that we could change our physical reality the same way we could manipulate a dream. I was wondering if you could comment on that?

KELZER: I think you misunderstood my earlier lecture, I believed then, and still hold now, that there is a certain degree of value in learning to direct or manipulate the dream scenario in lucid dreams. But this process is, in my overall view of things, only one basic and elementary step toward personal improvement. It is not, by any means, the most important aspect of lucid dreamwork evolution but is only one, initial, elementary skill or developmental task. Once lucid dreamers become proficient at this task, most will probably move on to the more inspiring aspects of psycho-spiritual development.

From my own experience the first time I became lucid, one of the things I did was mentally command a house to turn into a tree. I accomplished that in that first lucid dream. A week later I had another lucid dream in which I commanded a tree to turn into a rabbit, and that was accomplished. After awhile I began to become somewhat disinterested with that particular aspect of lucid dreaming, but I do not regret that I had those experiences. I think they constitute one step in a long, evolutionary process. Now, I am more interested at this point in my evolution, in going with the flow of a lucid dream than in using my conscious thoughts to direct the dream scenario. And I think this whole process is an interesting experiment with personal power.

When applying these concepts to the waking state, I was not so much talking about myself as a superman but as a growing, conscious being. Looking to the Christian tradition for example, if the Christ could manifest on the physical plane with the power of his thoughts, if that story is accurate and true (and we can't know for sure since it happened 2000 years ago), if extraordinary human beings at some stage in their development have the power to use their thoughts to manifest on the physical plane and perform what we ordinarily call miracles, and if we are all developing psycho-spiritually, then we ourselves must all be evolving in that overall growth model very slowly, very deliberately toward our own Christ consciousness or cosmic consciousness, it may take thousands of lifetimes for you and me to reach the stage of Christ consciousness, I do not care how long it takes. What is exciting to me now is the realization that evolution is part of what it means to me to be human. Lucid dreams provide a fascinating opportunity to practice and accelerate this conscious evolution, because if you can use your thoughts to create the dream scenario and receive a desired and chosen manifestation in return, then this has got to be a part of that overall evolution. At this point in my own life, I am not only using lucid dreams as a context for conscious manifestation, I am also using my conscious thoughts to practice manifesting on the physical realm. However, the difference between me and the Christ is that he could perform the most advanced manifestations in a few seconds, whereas it may take me a few years to perform even simple manifestations. So if I set for myself a physical goal of some kind, such as raising my income, changing the course of my career, or authoring a second book, and if I begin to visualize these goals consistently while practicing appropriate psycho spiritual disciplines, I may be able to manifest these goals within two to three years. I recognize that there definitely is a time frame involved here, and that one of the key differences between a spiritual master and a novice is the length of time involved in performing physical manifestations. I hope that ties it together for you.

Q: I'd like to make a comment on something I heard in some of Eric Craig's comments and some of the response that I've heard to it. I remember hearing something about the possibility of losing the meaning in dreams, and hearing what sounds like the idea that we do not always interpret lucid dreams. My sense from running into a lot of people who are excited about lucid dreams is not necessarily that the dream can't be interpreted but that the person tends to say, "Wow, this was a lucid dream, I made choices here that I couldn't make otherwise in an ordinary dream. I could look back and make other choices or movements or work with that rather than interpret it." So I'm just wondering whether for instance Eric would feel like that was understood. To me this seems like a whole area of discussion. I would almost love to see a lot more time given to it, because I do feel like there is a whole question about what can be done either with lucid dreams or other dreams, and what happens particularly in the public consciousness.

CRAIG: I'm always pleased to hear when lucidity is used to enable a more profound and truthful understanding of an individual's own personality and of the world in which he or she lives. There should be more of an emphasis on this aspect of dreaming within the rapidly growing body of lucid dream literature. I wish there were much more of an emphasis, actually, on the meaningfulness of dreams, on respecting the dreamt things themselves and I would like to see more of this work demonstrated by people such as yourself. Lucidity and understanding are not necessarily exclusive, as you and Stephen have pointed out, but often it turns out that way.

One more point I'd like to make is the sense that there is a bit of a disparaging attitude toward so-called "normal dreaming" on the part of those involved with lucid dreaming. For example, Stephen you just said that people are "deluded" in their normal dreams, that this is not the real world. This is a huge question you are raising having to do with the nature and meaning of "reality." Now maybe my point of view is different from yours, but I don't think we can blindly assume that the dream world is not real. How is it any less real than this world we are participating in right now? This points to the kind of philosophical thinking and research that is sorely needed among those involved in the study of lucid dreaming.

LABERGE: I've never suggested that the dream world is not experientially real. Of course it is. An experience is an experience. When I say that people are deluded in ordinary dreams, it is when you wake up and think, "Well I thought that was happening," when it wasn't happening in the way that we thought. Because your model of the non-lucid dream is you think it is physical reality. That is the way you're deluded, not because you are tricked by floating in a false world, an unreal world. That's because you've got the wrong world. We think, for example, there is gravity in that world, and there isn't any. That is the point of being deluded. You've got the wrong world. You think that you are in the world when you are not.

Q: That is a very materialistic definition.

LABERGE: Which definition?

Q: The definition that the person wakes up and they thought the physical world was there, while they were dreaming. That is a materialistic definition of reality. That world was there. It doesn't make any difference if it's still there once they wake up.