

LDE Quarterly Lucid Dreaming Challenge

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(This feature provides an unusual lucid dreaming task for LDE readers with each new issue. Participants agree to accept personal responsibility and all risks should they choose to undertake these tasks, which may possibly bring about mental, emotional, and even physical changes. We invite those of you who attempt these tasks to send your dream reports to LDE.)

Exploring the Bizarre Physics of Dreamspace Part 1: "Dreamstuff"

*"We are such stuff / As dreams are made on; and our little life / Is rounded
with a sleep."*

Prospero, in William Shakespeare's (1564 - 1616), *The Tempest*

Over the years I've found myself increasingly interested in the "bizarre physics of dreamspace." In this first of a series of challenges I invite participants to do basic research in this area.

To begin, let's entertain the question: **What makes up "the stuff" of dreams?** In our culture many people would say that dreams seem purely imaginary, that they have no substance as such, that "dreamstuff" has no intrinsic properties as such, but only those properties that dreamers impose on them. Oddly enough this point of view does not differ all that much from how some physicists see the physical universe. For example, consider this statement of Nobel prize winner, **Max Planck**:

"As a man who has devoted his whole life to the most clear-headed science, to the study of matter, I can tell you as the result of my research about the atoms this much:

"THERE IS NO MATTER AS SUCH!"

"All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particles of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter".

Of course, historically many cultures taught that in dreams we experience another universe, made of "dream matter" just as real as the matter of the physical universe, but far more subtle. In some ways this view seems compatible with M-

theory (the latest form of Superstring theory), in which physicists propose that the standard 3 + 1 space-time dimensions just won't do - and that we need 11 dimensions to understand how the physical universe behaves. But if true, this would mean that even our "brains" would consist not only of the (3 + 1) space-time component taken into account in the modern neurophysiological model, but an additional 7 dimensional component, which this model fails to include in its mechanistic model of consciousness. Perhaps dreams do occur "all in our brains" - but not in our (3+1) space-time brains, but in our eleven dimensional brains! And if we do experience these other dimensional components of self, it makes sense that we might do in our dreams, which often contain bizarre and hard to describe elements.

Also, for theories on the nature of dreaming, the validation of dream-psi (1-2) has made strictly subjective, solipsistic, theories of dreaming outdated and untenable. We need to change how we think about dreams, and to understand that dreaming involves a kind of perception.

For example, one can describe 'visual perception as process' as follows:

1. Object/event in the "external world";
2. Your visual sense abstracts/represents that object/event;
3. **You see an abstract pattern** of light, shapes, colors, etc.;
4. After a 'best fit comparison match" with stored templates of previously experienced object/events, functioning intentionality automatically identifies this pattern as **X. You perceive X.** or:
5. **Discrimination.** No match, or too poor a match. Back to stage **3**.

This process distinguishes between what one **sees**, and what one **perceives**. Even if two individuals **see** "the same" ink blot, they may **perceive** it quite differently. In dreams, much more so than in waking life, we identify what we experience in terms of those objects and processes familiar to us, even if the match seems very poor. To the dreaming mind, "similar to" often becomes "identical to." I wrote about this "The Substitution Phenomenon" in 1985 (3) and have developed this concept in subsequent papers (4-8).

If you look under the hood of a "dream car" will you find a "dream engine" that needs "dream gasoline" to run? Does your "dream body" have a "dream heart" that pumps "dream blood"? Do "dream lungs" breathe "dream air"?

When we identify objects in dreams, we typically do so based on a superficial visual resemblance of the dream object to a physical reality object. In ordinary dreams, where we don't realize that we dream, we incorrectly identify experienced objects as physical reality objects, while assuming they have all the characteristics of physical reality objects. But how closely do dream objects correspond to their physical reality counterparts?

If the properties of a dream object depends entirely on our subjective expectations for it, than a closer look at the object should satisfy those expectations - e.g., if I break open the shell of a "dream walnut", I will find a brown "brain-shaped" nutmeat inside. If I eat the nutmeat, I will experience the familiar walnut texture

and flavor as I chew on it. If I chop down a “dream tree” with a “dream ax”, I will see a ring of bark on the outside of the trunk, and a series of light and dark rings in the “dream wood”.

On the other hand, if the properties of dream objects do not entirely depend on the dreamer's conscious/unconscious expectations for them, dreamers might experience a variety of surprises when they inspect dream objects more closely, looking at the objects from all sides, looking at their “insides after breaking them open, etc.

Through observation and experimentation human beings have observed regularities in the behavior of the physical universe that has allowed us to deduce “the laws” of physics, chemistry, and biology, and to apply this knowledge in practical and beneficial ways. I suspect that a program of observation and experimentation by experienced dreamers, and especially lucid dreamers, will reveal that the dream universe also operates under certain laws that will go beyond the merely subjective. Unfortunately, observation and experimentation in the dream universe requires certain still rare skills – in lucid dreaming, and in the ability to critically observe - and to record - ones dreams. To the best of my knowledge, research by a group of experienced lucid dreamers into the basic properties of the dream universe has never before taken place. If you possess the required skills, please contribute to this group research effort – “to boldly go where no one has gone before!”

The Challenge: Exploring the Properties of "Dreamstuff"

When you next become lucid in a dream (where you know *that* you dream *while* you dream) look around the dream environment and focus on a specific dream object – an object that you have automatically identified as the dream counterpart to a waking physical reality object.

If you find yourself in an “outside” environment, you might choose a “dream stone”, or a “dream tree”, if “inside”, you might focus on a “dream chair”, a “dream book”, or some kind of “dream food”. Look at the object closely, and from different angles. Touch the object - what kind of texture does it have? Does it feel hard or soft, heavy or light? If you can open the object and look at its “inside” do so. As you do this, notice whether the experienced properties fit the expectations that you would have for a physical object of this kind. Does a “dream rock” have a rough texture? Does it feel heavy and hard? If you drop it, or strike it against another object, does it make a sound? What does it taste like if you chew on a piece of it? Does it have a smell? If the dream object changes as you interact with it, how does it change, and what does it change into? How do its properties compare with the waking physical reality object with which you had earlier identified it?

Record your experiences and interactions with the dream object in your dream journal in as much detail as possible - include colored drawings and diagrams.

Although I've found it rather difficult to bring over reliable scientific instruments into the dream universe, one can perform meaningful experiments using one's dream body as the instrument and one's lucid dreaming mind as the recording

device. Even simple experiments of this kind can yield intriguing and fascinating results.

As always, we invite those of you who accomplish this quarter's challenge to send your dream reports to **LDE!**

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