

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 for any risks should they choose to undertake them, which may possibly bring about mental, emotional, and even physical changes. We invite those of you who accomplish these tasks to send your dream reports either to Ed Kellogg, at alef1@msn.com, or to LDE.)

Exploring the Bizarre Physics of Dreamspace Part 2: "Dreamlight"

"Light seeking light, doth light of light beguile; So ere you find where light in darkness lies, Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes."

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) (in *Loves Labour's Lost*)

Do the laws of optics for light composed of electromagnetic waves/particles in the physical universe also apply to the light we experience in dreams as well? When we look at an image in a dream mirror, does the angle of incidence equal the angle of reflection? Do dream mirrors actually reflect, or do they simply serve as an appropriate symbolic medium for what the dreaming mind projects? Or might they do something entirely different? Does dreamlight travel at 3×10^8 dream meters per dream second?

Mainstream scientific theory promotes the idea that dreams seem a kind of virtual reality, and that what we experience in dreams has no material basis as such. Historically however, most cultures believed that the dream world seems just as real as the physical world, and that the matter that makes it up simply seems much more subtle. Interestingly, cutting edge theories in physics, such as superstring theory, introduces the idea that our universe may have many more dimensions than the usual four. This opens up the possibility that dreams could take place, in a material way, in higher dimensional space-time.

In dreams we see and experience 'light', but in my experience 'dreamlight' differs in a number of ways from waking physical reality light, and I doubt very much that it belongs anywhere on the accepted electromagnetic spectrum. How does dreamlight differ? Well, in lucid dreams I've noticed that most of the time neither I, nor the dream objects that I see, have shadows. And as best I can recall, this also holds true in my ordinary dreams. Now according to one widely accepted "scientific" theory of dreaming, the world we see in dreams derives from visual imagery, etc. stored in memory. According to this theory, some memories can emerge in dreams relatively intact, but most usually show up in distorted forms, transmuted and combined with other memories. I personally do not subscribe to this theory, as I have noticed many discrepancies between what this theory predicts, and what I actually experience in my own dreams. (For my own theory, see "Psi-Perception in Dreams: Next Stop - the Twilight Zone." - a **2003 PsiberDreaming Conference** Presentation - at

http://www.asdreams.org/telepathy/kellogg_pdc2003_001.htm) For example, although my waking physical reality experiences include the phenomena of light and shadow as an almost omnipresent way, in my dreams shadows show up more as a special effect, rather than as an intrinsic part of the dreamscape.

My experiences have led me to propose the theory that dream objects do not reflect, but instead emanate, dreamlight, and that 'dreamlight' and 'physical reality light' have rather different properties. And essentially linked to the phenomenon of dreamlight, we also need to consider the phenomenon of 'dreamsight'. Physical sight depends on the absorption properties of specific chemical pigments in the rods and cones of the retina to visible light, on the geometry of the physical eye, the shape of the lens, and so on. Could we possibly have dream eyes, made up of dream matter, that do something similar, on the 'as above so below' principle, or does dreamsight work in an entirely different way? Can we do anything to find out?

If I hold my dream hands over my dream eyes, my vision becomes dark - similarly if I close my dream eyelids. If I put on a pair of dream glasses my vision becomes sharper - when I take them off, my vision may blur. Of course dreamsight may work on entirely different principles and each of these effects may happen simply because I unconsciously and habitually expect them to. However, I also unconsciously and habitually expect to see light and shadow effects - yet these rarely occur despite similar expectations. Through careful observation and considered experimentation, lucid dreamers can learn something about how they see in dreams, and what they see in dreams. And perhaps by comparing notes, and taking note of unexpected commonalities and differences in the results of such experiments, we can begin to lay the groundwork for an understanding of dream reality based on first hand evidence, rather than on theories and opinions of armchair philosophers and scientists.

The Challenge: Exploring the Properties of "Dreamlight"

When you next become lucid in a dream (where you know *that* you dream *while* you dream) pay attention to the manifestations of light in your dream environment. Look for "a source of dreamlight" - a dream sun, a dream moon, a dream lamp, even a dream fire (does it feel hot?) . . . If you can find a source of "dreamlight", do you find dreamshadows behind objects that it illuminates? If you pick an object up that has a dreamshadow and move it about, does the dreamshadow behave similarly, or differently, to the way a shadow of a physical object would?

If you can find a dream lamp, try turning it on, and off. Does it go on immediately, or after a delay? (I've experienced both). When you turn it on, carefully observe what happens to the dream objects nearby. Do they become brighter? Do they cast shadows? Do the shadows disappear when you turn the dream lamp off?

If you can not find any obvious dreamlight source, simply pay attention to objects in the dream environment. Does light appear to come from within dream objects, or does the object appear illuminated from the outside? Does one side of the object have more light than another? Do you see any dreamshadows? If so, what kind of properties do they have?

Record your experiences and interactions with dreamlight sources, dreamshadows and dream objects in your dream journal in as much detail as possible - include colored drawings and diagrams.

Bonus Challenge: Exploring the Properties of "Dreamsight"

Although I've found it rather difficult to bring 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. For example, I came up with some experiments in regard to the mechanism of seeing in dreams, to determine whether I do in fact

'see' in three dimensions using binocular vision. In physical reality a dry run of the experiment works like this:

Part 1. With both eyes open look in the distance. Move the palm of your left hand towards your open left eye. As it moves closer it will begin to block the view. When it comes fairly close (but does not yet cover the eye tightly) the view to the far left will disappear - however the right half of the hand will appear transparent, as for this area the visual fields from the right and left eye overlap, usually giving complementary - but in this case providing competing - images. When you hold the hand closely covering the eye, blocking all light, you will see only the visual field of the right eye. Repeat this procedure for the other eye.

Part 2. Now with both eyes open, hold your right index finger - pointing up - a few inches in front of your nose at eye level, in the middle of your visual field. When you focus on the finger with both eyes you should see only one finger. However, if you look in the distance (not at the finger), you will see "two" fingers, an apparent doubling due to binocular vision. Close one eye, continuing to look in the distance, and you will now see only one finger. Open that eye, and you will see two fingers. Close the other eye instead, and you again only see one finger, but it will appear to have moved slightly depending on through which eye you view it, as each sees the finger from a slightly different perspective.

I've succeeded in performing this experiment on more than one occasion while fully lucid. In one dream I went out into a forested area, which certainly looked as three dimensional to me as a physical reality counterpart, and I performed the procedure outlined above. For example, looking in the distance with both eyes, I saw my dream finger doubled - when I blocked the vision from one of my dream eyes I only saw one dream finger.

Although the results of this experiment seemed almost the same when performed in a dream as when done physically, it did have one difference - in the middle of my repeating this experiment my finger turned into a twig of about the same size with buds! However, with the same results - when seen through both eyes looking in the distance I saw two finger-twigs, with one eye I perceived only one finger-twig. (Incidentally, I did intentionally change the twig back into a finger for the last trial run.)

Now this experiment does not prove beyond doubt that I see through 'dream eyes' with 'binocular vision', but it certainly offers evidence that supports this theory. I encourage any lucid dreamer who wants to try this experiment to do so and report on their findings. Simple experiments of this kind can yield intriguing and fascinating results. Do you have binocular vision in your dreams? Monocular? Triocular? Omniocular?

As always, we invite those of you who accomplish this quarter's challenge(s) to send your dream reports either to Ed Kellogg, at alef1@msn.com, or to **LDE!**