



Rene Magritte: The Enchanted Realm (Godwin)

## The Reality of Dreaming

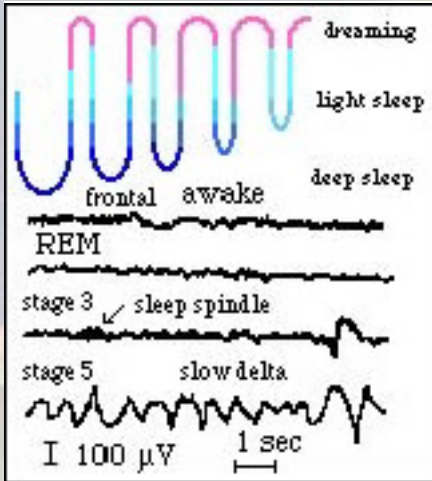
### REM and the Dreaming Brain

Dreaming is the most outstanding of the non-ordinary conscious states. It is one of which we are all aware to at least some degree, and one whose intensity, in cases of good recollection, parallels, or even exceeds that of sense experience of the 'real world'. Dreaming has definite correlates in central nervous activity in the so called rapid eye movement [REM] which are associated with electroencephalograms that have similar characteristics to waking activity, rather than the large slow waves of deep sleep, and are hence also sometimes called paradoxical. Although many people claim to dream rarely, or not to have dreams as vivid as the experiences of daily life, tests tend to confirm that these impressions stem from lack of recall of the dreaming state, because of subsequent periods of deep non-dreaming sleep that alternate with the dreaming state during sleep.

Phases of REM sleep are accompanied by specific paralysis of the muscles below the neck, which prevent us acting out our dream sequences. Indeed cats who have had certain midbrain centers removed do act out their dreams! The onset of light and subsequently dreaming sleep is mediated by specific nuclei in the pons, which secrete serotonin and nor-epinephrine and have ascending pathways that branch out widely across the cortex (p 63). During periods of light and dreaming sleep both sexes also experience sexual arousal, which is believed to accompany the regeneration of hormonal activity during the resting phase. Dreams thus can pos-

sess a kundalini-like energy.

Dream deprivation appears to result in specific syndromes over and above non-dreaming sleep. Selective dreaming sleep deprivation in cats results in physiological compensation. Various physiological functions have been suggested for dreams such as screening irrelevant data or participating in laying down long-term memory, including the controversial ideas of Francis Crick and co-workers, who suggested that dreams may be to forget irrelevant data from waking life, leading to the somewhat silly notion that remembering our dreams could interfere with normal brain function.



Above: Phases of sleep in the night.  
Below: Dreaming electroencephalogram is similar to waking (King).

Dreaming thus corresponds to a clear-cut functional brain state in which the long slow waves of deep sleep give way to a brain state like alert wakefulness in which the body is paralyzed and vivid subjective experiences occur. These experiences do not happen in the flickering of an eyelid, but from the timing of rapid eye movements, appear to correspond roughly in duration to the apparent duration of the dream.

Some intense phases of dreaming appear to bring about a hallucinogenic state in which dreaming is often coloured and hypnotically bizarre.

One may frequently feel one is up at a tremendous height or hang over precipices which are so awesome, and in scenes so bizarre as to make it obvious to all but the dreamer that this is another reality altogether. "I dreamed that I was inside a huge mouth. It was the devilish body of a witch. She had an enormous slimy throat and her tongue was writhing towards me trying to lick me in". "I was standing in a room looking out at a vast landscape. I felt a swaying and looked through the cracks in the floorboards. I could see we were on a teetering wooden tower, hundreds of storeys high". These dreams seem to possess additional and awesome power and potential.

### Childhood Dream

I am lying back spread-eagled on the ground.  
The sun is shining down very brightly.  
I am paralyzed. I have been laid out to die.  
The sun and the wind are weathering me.  
People have pierced me with poisoned thorns.  
They are slowly turning my body to jelly.  
My arms have already become numb.  
My life is oozing away from me.  
Will no one save me before I fade away?  
Chris King

## Dreaming as Anticipation of Experience

The conscious aspect of dreams contains phenomena which deserve serious consideration in their own right. The experiential and causal implications of dreaming appear to extend far beyond the physiological context. Although the significance of dreaming in recent western culture has concentrated on the symbolism of dreaming as an expression of fears and aspirations in daily life and its analysis as a means of therapy, the reference to dreaming in other cultures, from the mythological state which is also a state of consciousness, Dreamtime of the Australian aboriginal people, through the Senoi of Malaysia, to the Old Testament prophets includes the use of dreams to anticipate future problems and events, and is based on the concept that the dreaming state is another level of conscious reality, which is not an illusory representation of the 'real world' but rather, a mode of conscious existence in its own right. Dreams are thus interpreted as prophetic and conveying a wisdom about fortune and the changing circumstances of life, which may be realized by interpreting and incubating the dream. Joseph for example was both a prophetic dreamer and an interpreter of the Pharaoh's dreams.



Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream (Dobell and Sparrow).

My interest in dreaming was first kindled by "An Experiment with Time", in which the author, J.W. Dunne put forward the idea of multiple time dimensions to explain the second part of the book, which was an experiment where several people kept dual diaries, one of their dreaming and the other of their waking life.

An independent panel then judged the events in real life which were referred to by the dreaming entries. The surprising result was that as many dreaming events were associated with future experiences as were with past ones. Given the well known tendency for events which disturb us in real life to recur in dreaming, the frequency of the future references gave room for speculation on future associations in dreaming.

Subsequently I found many dreaming events were followed by a related waking event, particularly in the early part of the morning shortly after waking. The following experience brought home Dunne's idea in a very convincing way: "I am beset by a nightmare that a spider is stinging me. I want to brush it away, but fear that the sting will remain in my leg, so I stand in acute pain, waiting for it to let go. Some time later in the night I have a second dream I have forgotten to kill the spider, and has set in to stinging my leg for the second time. Again I go through the same agonized sequence. At about eight in the morning I am awoken by my wife getting up to feed our infant daughter, and comment how bizarre it was to have a double nightmare about being stung. I couldn't recall such a painful stinging

dream before. I then promptly go back to sleep. About an hour later, I am stung wide awake by a powerful wasp sting on the thumb, which I end blowing off to avoid breaking the sting. The sting is so bad, it blisters.”

The relative frequency of precognitive dreaming can be gauged by the number of small details from dreaming that appear subsequently in waking situations which arise by surprise or through accidental circumstances which could not have been consciously anticipated by the observer: “I wake up with a idea I was showing my daughter the solution to an impossible life dilemma represented by a set of interlocking rings. I walk to the dining table, where an old article about the Rubrik cube has fallen out of the bookshelf. I immediately remember that our more recent Rubrik puzzle is missing. My wife points to a pile of papers and tells me it is at the bottom. When I lift it out, the three interlocked rings of the solution make me realize I had dreamed indirectly about the Rubrik puzzle.” Here is another: “My wife is teasing my 4-year old son. “You're a bit of a rotten banana” she laughs. Suddenly I have a flash-back to a previous dream of the night, in which I am a guest of a middle-aged lady and eat a rotten banana which becomes very bad and gives me nausea.”

Memory of the Future - Oscar Dominguez (Jean)

Precognitive dreaming may also include specific names and references: “I have a dream of being shown through an ancient monument with some local dignitaries. There is water flowing across the floor. I realize this temple is the “Nablus”. At the same time, I am menaced by gunmen outside. Having no idea what a nablus is I note the name next day to find out. I am subsequently surprised to see a photograph in the newspaper of the Mayor of Nablus on the West Bank injured in a bomb blast. Many instances of “deja vu” may arise from previously experienced dreams which induce an uncanny familiarity.



The precognitive dream may also combine more than one future event simultaneously into a single dream: “Just as I was waking up, I dreamed that I was helping clean up a system of culverts and drains along a foreshore, which were blocked by a lot of branchlets. In the morning paper was a picture of a walkway in the harbour which was covered with waste sludge from a land fill, requiring the activation of an old system of scavenging culverts. Later in the day I came upon Christine cleaning up a bunch of poplar branchlets which had taken root while lying in a depression.”

Some dreams can be precognitive and retrospective at the same time. I dreamed I was going to “Nelson”, a distant town on the other island. I saw all these colour views of willow trees along the roadside. My son had gone down there a few

months ago and we went two years ago. But I was having breakfast next morning and asked about a strange book of fancy-dress clothing that was on the table. It turned out to be a documentary of this famous “wearable art” festival that is held annually in Nelson. I nearly fell off my chair as the dream hit me.

Likewise I had a strange dream that relates to the ‘key of knowledge’ which a friend had just written a dream of in a letter. In the dream, I was sitting in a coffee bar talking to an acquaintance. In passing I made a frivolous comment about robbing a bank. At the time I couldn't figure out how I could have gone and said such a thing in public. I was acutely alarmed by the fact that one of the other customers had overheard me and now appeared menacingly of a mind to call the cops. I can recall seeing a cartoon in the paper - “It's a case of entrapment. It said “BANK” in letters four feet high!” However this was me and I didn't rob a bank, I just said I might. This evening I was talking about the key of gnosis like in the letter, that had to be fitted to the cosmic lock of reality. And then I jokingly said “You know - Two to the left and three to the right” - the old combination lock trick! The stolen cosmic secret! And then boom, I fell straight back into the dream! That was what I must have said in the restaurant.

26 Oct 98 Last night I dreamed that I was in a pair of boats which were cutting across the bows of another larger boat. We were nearly cut in two. I saw the underwater bulb on the other boat's bow. It seemed to be part of a boating event gone wrong. I am NOT a sailor. This morning when we got the NZ Herald, there was an article on the Coastal Classic yacht race. A runaway heading at speed had charged across Second Chance's bows. The bizarre twist was that the boat was driverless and headed out eastward to sea and was never seen again. The driver was found fortuitously by search and rescue, lost dog paddling mid ocean.

Brian Inglis (1988) illustrates many accounts in history, in which precognitive dreaming has produced intricate detail, particularly in cases of violent or sudden death or accident. Some of these have very interesting features. One feature is the repeated nightmare which may occur two or three times, impressing on the dreamer the dream's significance. Many cases of seemingly telepathic dreaming have also been illustrated, where one person dreams of another's life crisis or two people have a parallel dream of the same event. However some crisis dreams extend beyond these limits. For example, a man dreaming of his brother's murder saw not only the events leading to the death, but also what was done with the body afterwards, consistent with precognition but not telepathy.

Another deep issue is whether a dream of disaster represents an inevitable ‘fated’ precognition, or a warning which can be used to thwart catastrophe. Inglis cites examples of both types of dreams. A woman dreaming her son was injured in a car accident took him to his grandmother's for protection, only to find he was knocked unconscious when a runaway car crashed through the garden fence. On the other hand a man who dreamed of harm coming to his daughter narrowly averted her death by drowning through continuous vigilance when the event came to pass the next day.

A friend had two dreams that a neighbour's boat had broken its mooring and was being driven on to the rocks. After the second dream, he awoke at dawn and went up on top of the hill to view the boat. At first all seemed okay, but just as he watched it, the mooring broke and away it went. Many years later his daughter

dreamed she was alone with her father in a black hearse. She subsequently travelled into the city with her mother and two sisters, mentioning the dream in passing, without the lugubrious detail. On the way home the mother, and two sisters were tragically killed instantly in a head-on collision. The dreamer somehow escaped from the wreckage unhurt.

1997 An acknowledgment to the airline passenger who, on his flight, dreamed the numbers he subsequently used to win a major lottery game.

Inglis suggests two distinct mechanisms for precognitive dreaming need and the accidental intrusion of arbitrary experience through the filter which forms the 'doors of perception' of the collective

subconscious, giving rise to two types of dream reflecting either crisis or trivia. Thus while the crisis dream may be triggered by a sense of the loss of another psyche, leading to a precognitive nightmare, the trivial variety may reflect any details of experience which happen to leak into conscious awareness and will often relate to unimportant events a day to a few weeks later.



Feb 98 A shrine to Nedrina McMullan aged 18 who dreamed she would die in a car crash. She was so disturbed by the eerie premonition that she wrote out a will, leaving her few belongings to charity. Two weeks later she and her boyfriend were run into by a drunk. She died after lying in a coma for a further two weeks.

Heavily symbolic dreams may also include a precognitive component. When I was seven or eight, in the early 1950s, long before ecocrisis, pollution, or the need for conservation, had become a recognized problem, I had a dream which surprised me because of the strange emotions it evoked: "I was immediately aware that I was in a wilderness, with all the richness implied by the landscape, grasses and trees, the sky and the sounds of animal and bird cries, except that at once I both felt obvious and exposed, and realized that something was wrong. The grass was too dry. Something had harmed the natural spectre and left it damaged and threatened. I looked over to my left and saw a lion growl, yet it was not a growl of hunger, but a growl of remorse at me, a human being. At the same time I saw a bird cry as it arced above the trees. I realized at once that they were both aware with the same consciousness that I was no longer part of the natural heritage because I was a human who had broken the natural order. I felt alone in this forsaken paradise and wandered across the earth looking for my own kind and the shelter of civilization. Eventually I came to an area that was heavily polluted with oil and grease. At last I saw an old brick factory and pressed up to the grimy windows eagerly, only to see humanity lining up in the subterranean interior, waiting in the hope of finding work in the factory. I ended humiliated, because I didn't have enough money to pay the fee required to join the work queue." Subsequently these issues have become a continuing theme in my life as they have in many people's, but at the time they were unusual and novel to me.

The relative frequency of accidental precognition leads to the notion that it is part of the natural endowment of the dreaming state of consciousness. However, the notion of reversed causality implied by precognition leaves normal models of

### Lucky dream

A Sydney man who dreamed of six numbers while travelling on a plane has won a million dollar prize in Lotto with them.

causal action in disarray. At the time a person has a precognitive dream, there may be no physical precursors of the nexus yet in existence. A plane which may crash in a storm two weeks hence as a result of mechanical failure could be re-routed to another schedule beforehand, someone could notice the cracked part, the storm may actually pass through a day sooner or a day later. The crack may not even yet have formed. The nexus may not actually exist as a physical entity at the time of the dream. How then is dreaming consciousness so casually able to trap the flow of future experience? One solution is that dreaming is a conscious realm whose rules are not constrained by the conditions imposed on the waking state.

Jungle with Lion - Rousseau

One example of this is frequent dreams of flying in which I am aware of a specific mental energy that comes into play during intentional levitation. I have spent many dreams urgently trying to make other people aware of the great significance of levitation as an indication of the power of the conscious spirit over reality, only to find that as I come to the crux,



they cannot see or hear me, as if I had truly become a ghost. Once mastered, dream-flying becomes effortless, but I often find myself having to exert a particular kundalini-like concentration in summoning up the reality of dreaming levitation. Physically, I am aware that gravitation is a fundamental force whose mathematical basis is related to the structure of space-time, and that apart from perhaps an inflationary phase in the universe during the symmetry-breaking of the fundamental forces, there is no evidence for anti-gravity. The known laws of physics thus do not apply in empirical terms to the dreaming state. This is obvious in a more profound way in that one can reverse a 'fatal' injury in a dream through an act of will. In dreaming anything and everything is possible, as long as it can be perceived.

Nevertheless, the waking state may also display similar potentialities to dreaming: I was out one night at a nightclub. A couple of years before, I had lived with a girl while travelling in England. I hadn't seen her since she left London for Paris and I shortly after left myself for New York to head off the opposite way around the globe. Apart from a single letter from France, I had never seen her or had contact with her since. For no apparent reason in the nightclub, I gained a very strong impression that a girl in front of me was her. All I could see was the back of her head. I moved forward in the half dark, and craned around to get a look at her face,

but it was nothing like the person. Turning back, I looked behind me. At that moment, I saw her! She was actually standing directly behind where I had been. Strangely she hadn't yet seen me either.



TIME Jacob's Ladder

Gen 28:11 “And Jacob lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, ... and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad ... and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Carl Jung (1963) describes a number of experiences involving dreaming, and waking experiences and even physical events which reflect synchronicity, an acausal principle of coincidence connecting both experiences and events, often characterized by simultaneity. During an intense discussion on precognition and parapsychology with Freud, who at first rejected such phenomena (p 374) the bookcase split with a loud report, leaving Freud aghast. Jung reports several other instances: While awake in a train he had a prophetic *deja vu* of an accident he discovered on reaching his destination (p 374).

Another time Jung awoke at night. “it occurred to me that I had been awakened by a feeling of dull pain as though something had struck my forehead and then the back of my skull. The following day I received a telegram saying that my patient had committed suicide. He had shot himself. Later I learned that the bullet had come to rest in the back wall of his skull”.

### Lucidity in Dreaming

One of the most difficult aspects of dreaming is that, although the dreamer firmly believes they have conscious volition, in fact the dream has such control over the dreamer that the full potential of the dreamed is ignored. It is an exaggeration of the way the internal dialogue of waking life prevents the observer from witnessing the totality of consciousness: “Although I am dreaming intricate scenes of a road down the Nile which passes through temples full of Arab worshippers, and winds alongside brown-sailed trading boats, and suddenly find myself turning a corner on a bus in crowded Cairo, all along I have been the slave of the dreaming state, because at no time have I been able to stop the flow of dreaming for long enough to realize that I am in dreaming reality.”



Gurdjieff, Carlos Castaneda, and Stephen LaBerge all discuss techniques of “lucid dreaming” in which the dreaming and waking state are connected, so that the intent of the dreamer can gain control. The technique is to pick some simple action that the dreamer will perform as an act of volition to assume temporary command of their will, for example the act of looking at the backs of ones hands. As the writings of Castaneda are enigmatic and the authenticity of their inspiration is unresolved, an experimental test of the techniques seemed essential. I thus resolved to adopt the technique of dreaming during a time I happened to be living on my own for a couple of months. Thus as I went to sleep, I looked intently at the back of my hands, fixing my concentration on memorizing the intent of doing the same in dreaming.



Chagall - The Concert (Chagall) Flying dreams are common.

At first this had little effect, but the act of examining and noting ones dreams, particularly when sleeping alone tends to bring them to the forefront of awareness. Eventually, I would have frustrating dreams in which my hands would figure strongly. I would be climbing a ladder, and remember later that I was actually looking right at the backs of my hands without comprehending my task at all. Suddenly in a dream of no particular significance I realized with impending horror that I was about to look at my hands. I could feel myself bringing them up to my face, and I looked at them. The effect was to set off a maelstrom:

“Immediately I was aware with the complete lucidity of the waking state. I could feel an irresistible energy that was thrusting me upward in an ever increasing speed. At the same time, I was standing on a bright sunny day on a street which ran about a block away to a promenade which stretched along an ocean beach. There were buildings on either side and a metal rail at the beach. The force pushing me upwards was paralleled in the dream by a strong gust of wind blowing spray in from the sea. I realized that my attention was heightened far above the usual waking state, because I was separately aware of each one of the drops of spray which doused me through my light Indian shirt. I was also immediately struck with an overwhelming melancholy. I knew at once the cause. Now my awareness was completely identified with my dreaming body, I was lost beyond

any hope of recovery! With all my will I wanted to know where and how I would ever find my way back again. I looked up at the sky, and realized that home was not even in the same universe. I saw a woman walking towards me along the side walk. I rushed towards her and grabbed her by the shoulders. She had very dark eyes and dilated pupils. At once I stared deep down into her eyes searching with the question "Where can I find the way back?" She just looked at me with the smile of someone who knows I should know by now there is never a way back!"

"At that moment, I woke up with my view of reality permanently changed. There was no way back to the old world view of causality and the illusory nature of dreaming. Suddenly all my experiences of precognitive dreaming assumed an altogether more sinister proportion. Of course I had actually been an out and out indulger in the dream, because the technique actually requires repeatedly looking to and from your hands to repeatedly assume control of one's will, however the final truth then began to sink in. What was the relation between my travelling upwards at speed, and my standing in the street? Then another awareness struck me. There was another whole sequence of events that was so different from the rest, that I had not been able to assimilate them together. "

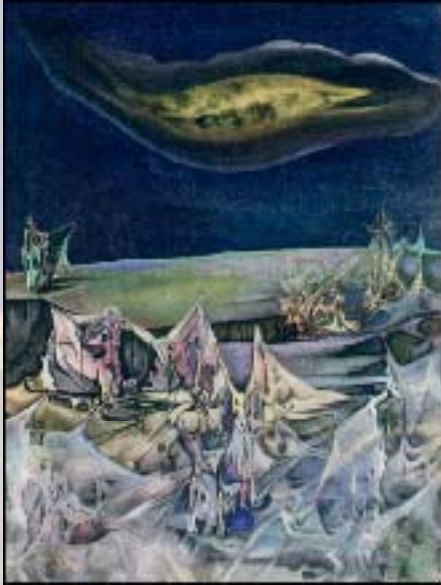
"The whole time I was so anxious to find the way home, another I was simultaneously gently floating, bobbing against the ceiling of my room, looking down with a sense of exhilaration at the fact that I could see myself down there lying in the bed and that I wasn't lost at all!" There were thus no less than three I's, each witnessing its own reality from the point I looked at my hands to the point I woke up again. The experience of floating on the ceiling also bought back to me a flood of images from early childhood in which I am floating out of my body in the bedroom at various angles to the bed. They are both unfamiliar and at the same time repeated memories of another almost forgotten reality, different from dreaming.

The nature of dreaming reality and its relation to physical existence is one of the deepest mysteries yet waiting to be explored. There are reports of both Indian yogis and Tibetan Lamas practising forms of dream yoga in which the dreaming body attains a separate existence which may even penetrate the waking consciousness of another person, either through possession or the appearance of the dreaming body. Casteneda's spine-chilling session jumping over a precipice was paralleled by a second reality watching don Genaro conjuring with a hat. In what I would term the sorcerer's explanation waking reality arises as a special form of a wider dreaming reality in which our the collective sub-conscious of our dreams is united through the manifestations of the physical world. In the sorcerer's explanation all things, from simple coincidences through to the great miracles of history, become possible through understanding the inner nature of dream yoga.

The Lucid Dreaming of Stephen LaBerge makes a similar exploration of the dreaming technique, in which one uses mnemonic induction by asking oneself in waking life "Am I dreaming?" then realizing more easily that one is dreaming because of bizarre differences from waking life.

I have also found this technique is helpful: "I was in the mountains of Nepal. I walked through a village. I was wearing old floppy brown garments like a peasant, but was a traveller. I walked past a small temple with a tantric deity and some people with prayer wheels at the front. I walked back through a small cutting. I stumbled through a farm shed with an old dead cow strung up on some posts. It was

large, but its skin had already dried out. There were some small rusty-coloured pigs lying about. I saw my friend Julian nearby. I walked over to the edge of the hill and looked out over the great expanse of mountain scenery. Suddenly I saw four very odd old-fashioned polygonal hot-air balloons taking off from the other end of the village. I called out to Jules to go and have a look, as it was the sight of a lifetime. I fumbled for my camera, thinking I'd never make it to the cutting in time. Suddenly I realized this was a dream and I could quickly fly over the cutting and get a better view. I flew up with great speed, towards the leading balloon. I realized I was very high up and became alarmed at the concentration required to keep myself flying at such a height. I immediately woke up."



Wolfgang Paalen Landfall (Waldberg)

While Casteneda's approach leads to dreaming as an extension of supernatural reality, LaBerge is more cautious, depicting lucid dreaming as a therapeutic, pleasurable and entertaining, but not necessarily occult phenomenon, in which realities are mere constructs of the dreaming mind. There is a degree of debate as to whether or not dreaming, and particularly lucid dreaming can enable the dreamer to witness events in other places or at other times. The very uncontrollability of even lucid dreaming can make such investigations difficult and treacherous.

"I dreamed I was looking at the canal boat we used to have when I was a student in England. I looked at it closely. It seemed very different from the boat of my memories. I then stepped onto it with the strong realization

of that special feeling of how the boat rocks when you get on the roof. I realized I was lucid dreaming and walked along the roof with the idea of looking at the number plate and checking it later against some photographs to see if it was the real number. I bent over to look at it. I was very disappointed to see that it was grotesque and misshapen and had no number, but only crude initials CK that were bulging out in 3-D and visibly sagging down." The onset of lucid dreaming often provokes flying and also waking: "Later I again realized I was lucid and immediately levitated with great force into the ceiling, and crashed into fluorescent lights with a smashing and tinkling of glass. Just before I woke I remember looking at the falling glass and wondering why there was no phosphor coating."

The onset of lucidity may also cause a profound feeling of power: "I was going for a walk up the hill on our land where there is a panoramic view of the sea, with a strange woman who I perceived to be a lesbian. She briefly put her arm around me. Adventures on the way caused her to get ahead. I strode up the hill in great strides and caught up with her as the view began to spread out at the top. The

scene was more reminiscent of a mountain pass. Suddenly there were two women. I embraced both around the shoulders firmly, putting my hands on each of their breasts. I said the reason for my interest in coming to the top of the hill was because of its shamanic power and at that moment let out a screeching cry and jumped high in the air holding on to both of them, carrying the three of us tumbling over and over, landing again on our feet with a light spring. This caused me to wake.”

Techniques of lucid dreaming thus create many unresolved challenges for the dreamer which have not been fully explored or understood. While one lucid dreamer may merely have an invigorating sense of freedom and adventure, another may stand before the doors of eternity.

One of the deepest challenges of the dreaming state is learning to break out of the habitual use of dreaming realities that reflect the familiar conditions of the waking world. Lucid dreams may also tend to inhibit the uncontrolled potentialities of the state by making it more controlled. The world of the dream leads to vastly unfamiliar realities which are strange to us, not only because they open the vast spectre of precognitive consciousness, but because another reality, alien and totally different, stands at the portal. The tendency is for the dreamer to indulge dreams which are bizarre reflections of the world they know, or to lose their conscious grasp altogether.



Max Ernst - A Little Calm (Waldenburg)

“I dreamed I was in a country under military siege. There were tanks in the streets below and a group of us were gathered together in a room. It was only a matter of time before we were found. I believed the only hope of escape lay through the use of a blue powder, like chalk dust. I became filled with the sense of concentrated energy I would normally associate with flying. As I reached out in a gesture of intent, I found that I was literally passing into the pupils of another person, escaping the imminence of the coup. I found myself floating in a completely unfamiliar reality. Something like a dark, virgin planet in the early stages of evolution. I could move by intent. I had a location, but no form. Once again I was lost!”

## The Dreamer and the Dreamed

The relation between the dreamer and the waking self is complex. The two are not distinct, because in reality the waking self is a form of the dreamer. The two become joined by the technique of dreaming and the potentialities of dreaming apply also to the waking state. The implications are unforgettable, yet remain almost unexplored. Castaneda even suggests that to see oneself from 'outside' i.e. from the dreaming body is a mortal risk.

LaBerge annotates a variety of experiences similar to dreaming, including the out of the body experience, OBE in which the body appears to peel away from the sleeper in a context as if one was awake in the bedroom as opposed to the bizarre context of dreaming. LaBerge cites a study by Karlis Osis, director of the American Society for Psychical Research in which in all but a few of 100 cases there was absolutely no correspondence between the OBE and the details of a target room they were supposed to visit. "But the existence of even occasional accurate OBE perceptions is a fact that still needs to be explained". LaBerge, Inglis and Faraday also provide examples of shared dreaming in which two dreamers have a linked dream possibly in which they have a common experience together. LaBerge sees this as the source of the 'accurate' OBE, however many of Inglis's historical accounts of precognitive and other dreams display very accurate details not fully explained in this way.

## Close to the Edge

Bush Potato Dreaming - The marks left by the ancestors  
(Willis)

The near death experience or NDE, frequently described by many people in a variety of physical crises, from operations to heart attacks, often constitutes a cosmic type of dream-like experience. "A man is dying and at the point of greatest discomfort ... he begins to hear an uncomfortable loud ringing or buzzing, and at the same time finds himself moving outside his own physical body, but still in the same physical environment and sees his own body through a distance as through he is a spectator. He notices that he has a body .. of a very different nature and with very different powers. Others come to help him ... and a loving warm spirit of a kind he has never encountered before - a being of light - appears before him. This being asks him ... non-verbally to evaluate his life and helps him by showing him a panoramic playback of the major events of his life. At some point he finds that he is at some sort of barrier or border ... yet he finds that he must go back ... that the time for his death is not yet come." (Andrew Moody)



These experiences vary considerably: For John Lilly (1972) "There is a golden light permeating the whole of space everywhere in all directions out to infinity. I

am a single point of consciousness, of feeling, of knowledge... Suddenly in the distance Appear two points of consciousness, sources of radiance warmth and love... They transmit comforting reverential awesome thoughts... They tell me that I can stay in this place, that I have left my body, but that I can return to it if I wish." A friend had a similar experience when having an emergency kidney operation: "I went shooting up like a rocket and saw this great blue light which was a consciousness which could communicate directly with me. I realized I was being given the choice whether to go or to return and saw the web of connections to my children unfinished calling me back. Then it was as if I was looking out on my past and future life laid out like a landscape being viewed from a high mountain."

Carl Jung in a heart attack had a rather different experience, first seeing the continents of the world from a great height, then when trying to enter a floating rock temple "the whole phantasmagoria of earthly existence fell away or was stripped away from me - an extremely painful process. Nevertheless something remained; it was as if I now carried everything I had experienced or done... I might also say it was with me and I was it. This experience gave me a feeling of extreme poverty, but at the same time great fullness." As he was about to enter the temple "and meet those people to whom I belong in reality" and "know what had been before me, why I had come into being, and where my life was flowing" his doctor floated up to him, also in primal form, telling him in a mute exchange of thought "I had no right to leave the earth and must return." He was most concerned that the primal form of the doctor was an omen of mortal risk. In fact the doctor died of septicemia within a few days.



Mahakala (Arguilles)

Stanislaw Groff (1988) illustrated a bizarre occasion in which a person having an NDE after cardiac resuscitation, correctly told him of a shoe on a ledge three floors above the crisis room they had seen while out of their body. She implored him to go and look and when he did he found it. LaBerge points out the similarity between near death experiences and transcendent lucid dreams. These may occur as one learns to escape the confines of the dreaming ego, which itself is no more real than the illusory identities of other dream beings, by realizing all aspects of the dream, including the ego are illusory creations of the mind. This gives way to exalted dreams similar to the NDE in

which clear light and similar merging of self and non-self occur.

This brings us to the realm of the *bardo* - the manifold graspings of maya and the clear light of the void experienced as one approaches death, and through the mastery of which it is believed that one can choose one's own reincarnation. Whether we reincarnate individually, or incarnate from the collective continuum of cosmic consciousness, the *bardo* nevertheless represents the ultimate dreaming reality that underlies all forms of conscious life.