THEORETICAL AND PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Terminology in Lucid Dream Research

Charles T. Tart
University of' California at Davis

George Gillespie, writing in the November 1983 issue of the Lucidity Letter, describes his "lucid dreaming" as including the knowledge that he is dreaming while he is dreaming, but without his consciousness being more like his ordinary waking state than like his ordinary dreaming state (Gillespie, 1983). He asks the question whether his dreaming is lucid by my definition of lucid dreaming: "Lucid dreams are those in which the dreamer is aware that he is dreaming, clearly recalls his waking life and considers himself to be in full command of his intellectual and motivational abilities."[1]

By this definition Gillespie's dreams are not lucid. In my "From Spontaneous Event to lucidity..." review (Tart, 1979) I put great emphasis on the fact that knowing that you are dreaming while you are dreaming is a necessary but not a sufficient criterion for labeling a dream "lucid." The full definition of a lucid dream given in that review article (p. 255) is, "Lucid dreaming is an altered d-SoC (discrete state of consciousness) characterized by the lucid dreamer experiencing himself as located in a world or environment that he intellectually knows is "unreal" (or certainly not ordinary physical reality) while simultaneously experiencing the overall quality of his consciousness as having clarity, the lucidity of his ordinary waking d-SoC."

This is not to say that Gillespie's dreams are not of interest: far from it. Since Frederick van Eeden (in Tart, 1969) coined the term "lucid dreaming," however, and since he characterized his dream consciousness as more liking waking than dreaming, I think we owe it to van Eeden to reserve the term "lucid dream" for this sort of event, not for any dream in which there is only knowledge that one is dreaming. I shall propose the new term, "dreaming—awareness dreams" to describe ordinary dreams that include some concurrent awareness that one is dreaming, but where this awareness is not accompanied by a shift in conciousness to the altered state of lucid

The importance of making this distinction will depend on whether lucid dreams and dreaming—awareness dreams ultimately turn out to be part of a continuum of dreaming consciousness or whether lucid dreams (and perhaps dreaming—awareness dreams) are qualitatively different in important respects from ordinary dreaming. Insofar lucid dreams and dreaming—awareness dreams are qualitatively different from each other and/or from ordinary dreams, it is vitally important to distinguish them in studies which attempt to correlate various psychological and personal qualities with the occurrence or qualities of lucid dreaming.

For example, Gillespie refers to a study of "lucid dreaming" by Gackenbach in which the questionnaire used defined lucid dreaming simply as "awareness of dreaming while in the dream state." Given our discussion, this may actually be a study of a mixture, in unknown proportions, of people who have had genuine lucid dreams and people who have never had lucid dreams, but have had dream—awareness dreams. By mixing apples and oranges, poss-ible correlations of either type of dream with psychological factors way have been confused and diluted beyond the point of detectibility.

Now my definition of lucid dreaming above, based on van Eeden and my own researches, is a first attempt to clarify an experience that is rather exotic by our cultural norms. That is why I defined the <u>overall quality</u> of lucid dream consciousness as being like ordinary consciousness. This is a good definition given what we know now. If we have the kind of progress in understanding consciousness that I hope we will have, I believe that this definition will be seen as rather crude within the decade.

I doubt very much that lucid dreams are <u>exactly</u> like ordinary consciousness in their quality of consciousness. Ordinary con-sciousness varies in its qualities from moment to moment, especially if you have short samp-les of it. It is useful to say I am in my "ordinary" state of consciousness now, just as I was an hour ago, but I am sure a two minute sample of my consciousness an hour ago would be different in important ways from a two minute sample of my consciousness taken right now. Lucid dreaming also varies in its qual-ities from moment to moment. We do not know enough in detail about either state to do more than give overall characterizations at pre-sent.

BUT, we can be reasonably clear in our initial definitions in our writings and in presenting questions to subjects, and thus eliminate sane unnecessary confusion. This is a plea to writers and researchers then: use "lucid dreaming" the way van Eeden used it, and use some distinct term(s) for other, interesting dreams that do not meet that definition of lucidity. Otherwise we will waste a lot of time trying to reconcile results from differ-ent studies that were all supposedly about "lucid dreams," but which were actually about different things.

<u>References</u>

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Tholey, P. (1983) Relation between dream content and eye movements tested by lucid dreams. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 56, 875—878.

van Eeden, F. (1969) A study of dreams. In C. Tart (Ed.), Altered States of Consciousness. New York: Wiley, pp. 145—157.
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1. This definition is attributed by Gillespie to me, with his referenced source being an article of Tholey's (1983). I cannot find any statement of mine exactly like this in the referenced article (Tart, 1979), so it is not a direct quote, but it is generally repre-sentative of my thinking.

Original source: *Lucidity Letter Back Issues*, Vol. 3, No. 1, March, 1984, page 82.