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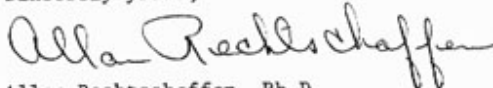
Dear Mr. Hearne:

Thanks much for your recent letter on your lucid dream research. I certainly think this research is important because it is the one occasion when the dreamer can critically evaluate his dream consciousness while it is in progress. You have added the ingenious and important element of having the dreamer communicate his observations to you at the same time. There is, of course, good reason to use eye movements for this communication since we know the eye muscles are certainly not inhibited during REM sleep whereas other muscle groups are--at least those in the head and neck region. I have had similar luck with eye movements as a mode of communication during sleep in the study of a narcoleptic lady during sleep paralysis. She could respond to my questions while in sleep paralysis with clear eye movements in the requested direction. As you may know, I think of sleep paralysis as a REM variant in which waking consciousness is not yet completely diminished. (That is why the hypnagogic hallucinations which usually accompany sleep paralysis are viewed as hallucinations rather than dreams, i.e., there is a mixture of reality perception and dreams.) Enclosed is an illustration which shows both the spontaneous and "command" eye movements during an attack of sleep paralysis.

I am convinced by your evidence that lucid dreams do indeed occur during REM periods. I would also guess, intuitively, that they do not occur during NREM sleep. However, the failure to communicate with eye movements does not necessarily mean that lucid dreams do not occur in NREM sleep. There might be a "sluggishness" of eye movement control in NREM sleep which would prevent their communication by that technique.

Do not worry about my spreading your findings around. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely yours,



Allan Rechtschaffen, Ph.D.
Professor, Departments of
Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Director, Sleep Laboratory

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Enclosure