

## LD vs. LSD

Maria Isabel Pita

*LSD's value is in being a shortcut to the unconscious, so that one enters the realm of intuition unhampered... The chemical did not reveal an unknown world. What it did was to shut out the quotidian world as an interference and leave you alone with your dreams and fantasies... But the drug effect does not strengthen the desire to turn the dream, the vision, into reality. It is passive. I have to go on in my own ways... seeking wholeness not by a passive dreaming that drugs give, but by an active, dynamic dreaming that is connected with life, interrelated... which we can enjoy with the awakened senses.—Anaïs Nin*

Anais Nin was speaking of the creative process, but her words can be applied to Lucid Dreaming, which is indeed “active and dynamic”, providing not merely a shortcut but direct access to the unconscious. And just as with LSD, what each person experiences in a LD is mysteriously related to their waking reality thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Yet unlike an acid trip—which only appears to transform the world while physically draining us—a lucid dream infuses us with energy by fully immersing us in our innate creativity.

I had always believed in the Divine unity of everything, but one night tripping on acid in Tropical Park, Florida, I actually experienced a beatific sense of wholeness I didn't have to make any effort to defend from my modern, too often cynical reason: the drug's energy destroyed all doubts like a laser beam. I felt as though I had become my real self. “It's all so simple!” I flung my arms around my date's neck, an action I kept repeating because our embrace was the very core of the night to which I naturally returned as the tide ebbs and flows. I would run off to enjoy the playground, skipping down the asphalt path as if it was the yellow brick road, then fly back to rest against his chest and feel his arms around me as the whole marvelous world. “It's so simple!” I kept repeating. “Why, **how**, have they complicated it so much?!” I could not for the life of me understand how mankind had managed to mess life up so badly when it was divinely simple.

I saw a Volkswagen with ears and a tail attached to it and couldn't stop laughing for a long time. It seemed such a perfect symbol of how ridiculous modern men could be, driving a mouse around, vitally cowards deep inside despite all their superficial sophistication. As we walked through the vast park, completely deserted at that time of night, I was torn between my date's golden-haired smiling warmth and a deep, deep love for my shadow. There were no words to describe it, I just knew it was the real me. I thought—I should always think like my shadow. It is absolutely pure and fearless, and it's me, the **real** me! I could ignore my jeans, sagging like old flesh, and my earth-brown boots because I was truly that slender darkness dancing on the grass with no worries, no problems whatsoever. I stood for a long time before the calm, luminous beauty of water. Tall thick blades of grass rising from the lake evoked the columns of an ancient temple, and I imagined that humanity in its youth had perceived reality the way I did when I was tripping, as absolutely magical. The deep water universe gave birth to galaxies of light when I threw in a stone and made a wish, perfectly confident all I hoped and desired would eventually flow my way if I truly believed it was possible.

My date was straight and drove us to Key Biscayne. Street signs were ahead of us and then behind us in the same instant. When we began ascending onto a freeway, spiraling up and up, I felt as though I had died, left all gravity behind, and was floating as a single cell into the stream of lights flowing swift as blood through an eternal, endless body of darkness. We parked the car right in front of the ocean and lay on its hood staring up at the sky. Soft, dark clouds wafted around the full moon like furs

slipping off a woman's smooth white shoulder. My breathing and the rhythm of the tide were one and the same, the living space of my chest rising up into the earth's atmosphere. The whole world was my body. When I sat up, my date began massaging my shoulders and back. I closed my eyes and the pressure of his thumbs and fingers caused three dimensional scenes to flash behind my eyelids in countless small squares that advanced and then receded to be replaced by another honeycomb-like wall of colorful, crystal-clear images. My skin, muscles and bone felt like tense bands of energy in which were stored faces, furnished interiors, breathtaking landscapes, everything! Later, we leaned against the car kissing. I was wearing a long necklace of golden fish and I dangled it in front of his face teasingly. "These are the keys to the kingdom," I said. "Will you come with me?" To which he replied, pressing his body against mine, "Sure, let's go."

It wasn't until I had my first lucid dream years later that I experienced a comparable feeling of union with my environment inseparable from a sense of absolute, timeless freedom. LSD offered me some teasing glimpses of a transcendent state of being, breathtaking shortcuts to enlightenment, my personal path to which is now paved with the magical stepping stones of lucid dreams. A vital difference between LD and LSD is that I don't come down after a lucid dream or suffer any adverse side effects, on the contrary. Certain drugs can help "blow your mind" and break down emotional and conceptual barriers, but so too can "waking up" in your dreams. The LD "high" has the potential to weave together night and day, our conscious and subconscious minds, our ego and Inner Self, in a creativity promoting, life enhancing sustainable practice. My best LD's are hands down more intense, more memorable than my best acid trips because I have some ability to shape the experience, and that really is the key. Tripping was essentially passive, the result of my brain's chemistry temporarily altered by an external influence. When I lucid dream, the opposite happens—something **inside me**, that **is me**, sparks my awareness of being in a dream, **of** the dream, empowering me to thoughtfully and sensually engage with it. When I LD, I can question and learn from the dream and, if need be, lovingly transform it, because what is really happening is that I'm transforming myself.