The third year for IJoDR
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The International Journal of Dream Research is reaching its third year. The two issues of 2009 included 13 original papers and one invited essay. These articles covered a large variety of topics like lucid dreaming, dream recall, dream content, nightmares, dreams and psychopathology, and sleep quality. Submissions from all over the world including Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany clearly indicate that our journal is truly international.

Bigna Lenggenhager, and Ahmed Karim propose a classification of lucid dream experiences and also point out the importance of having clear defined concepts of the variety of states of consciousness which can be experienced during dreaming and deep sleep and, thus, also underline the importance of combining the first person perspective (introspection) with third person approaches (measurement techniques like EEG or fMRI).

Overall, we have the impression that Allan Hobson’s paper kicked off a fruitful discussion about the basics and the future of lucid dream research. Every researcher is invited to submit his or her ideas on that topic so we can include them in one of the next issues of IJoDR.

In addition to the lively discussion of Allan Hobson’s article, the new issue includes six original papers covering topics like color in dreams, déjà vu experiences, dream content and romantic relationships, methodology of dream content analysis, dream content and procedural memory, and sport dreams in athletes. We also started a new section of book reviews, not only focusing on recently published books, but also on interesting and sometimes historical books that include original ideas, data, or methodological approaches that are still relevant to modern dream research.

Among other topics, Andrew Brylowski excellently summarizes the lucid dream research done in the 1980s to complement the overview given by Allan Hobson. The commentary by Daniel Erlacher, a sports scientist, and Heather Chapin highlights the use of lucid dreaming to enhance daytime performance in athletes. Jayne Gackenbach, a well-known lucid dream researcher, stresses the importance to study the psychological aspects of lucid dreaming. The usage of lucid dreaming in the treatment of nightmares and posttraumatic stress disorder is elaborated by Josefin Gavie and Antti Revonsuo. Brigitte Holzinger raises the issue of déjà rêve experiences were re-called déjà rêve. Arthur Funkhouser and Michael Schredl’s paper clearly indicate that déjà rêve experiences were related to previous dream experiences and, thus, should be attributed to a previous dream experience and, thus, should be called déjà rêvé.

Our invitations (sent out to many researchers in the field) to comment on the essay “The neurobiology of consciousness: Lucid dreaming wakes up” by J. Allan Hobson published in the last issue of IJoDR (Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp. 41-44) yielded a good resonance. Fourteen researchers or research groups sent in commentaries on the fascinating topic of how lucid dream research can contribute to consciousness research in general. The commentaries were arranged in alphabetical order.

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and psychological terms.

Because dream content analysis is one of the most often used method in dream research (e.g., Hall & Van de Castle, 1966), it seems important to stimulate the field to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. In his comprehensive review, Michael Schredl points out what pitfalls should be avoided using this methodology and what kind of research is necessary to strengthen the scientific credibility of dream content analysis. We plan to include "educational" papers of this kind in the future because we think that using a sound methodology that fulfils the common criteria of science is very advantageous for our field.

Sleep-dependent memory consolidation is a rapidly growing field getting much attention because of its robust and interesting findings. Jan Born, head of an active research group reviving the paradigms developed in the 1960s and 1970s and combining these strategies with up-to-date memory research and endocrinology, recently was awarded with the “Leibniz Preis” honoring his efforts in pursuing this branch of research. Although a pilot study carried out by Joseph De Koninck and his group (1996) indicated that dream content might be directly related to memory consolidation, the study of Michael Schredl and Daniel Erlacher did not confirm this finding. Nevertheless, global dream characteristics like emotionality might be linked to differences in the performance on a procedural memory task (mirror tracing) between the evening training session and the morning recall session. We are confident that the question of how dreaming is related to memory consolidation will be studied intensively in the future.

There is still an ongoing discussion whether people dream in color or in black-and-white, at least sometimes (Schredl, Fuchedzhieva, Hämig, & Schindele, 2008; Schwitzgebel, 2003). Robert Hoss analyzed large samples of dream reports with respect to how often different colors were explicitly mentioned by the dreamer. His conclusions that spontaneously reported dream colors do not reflect the normal waking visual experience or personal preferences, but rather can be associated with neurological mechanisms involved in the perception of color as well as psychological factors including the human emotional response to color, are very intriguing and will stimulate the research in this specific field.

The effect of waking-life experiences on dream content has been demonstrated in different areas, for example, the amount of driving a car during the day was positively correlated with the frequency of driving dreams (Schredl & Hofmann, 2003). Daniel Erlacher and Michael Schredl were able to demonstrate that almost all athletes dream about sports and that the most influential variables affecting sport dream frequency are dream recall in general, the amount of sport practice per week and the number of competitions per year. These findings indicate that the time spent with the activity and the emotional valence associated with this activity affect the probability of incorporating a waking-life experience into subsequent dreams.

In his review of the dissertation of Wilhelm Weygandt that was supervised by the well-known physiologist and psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, Michael Schredl points out that many interesting topics were studied at that time (late 19th century) even if the researchers did not have the possibilities we know have (sleep laboratory, polysonography, etc.). Weygandt, for example, reported very interesting dreams demonstrating how external stimuli affect dream content.

We want to encourage researchers all over to world to send us reviews, not only of recently published books, but also of books or other publications that include interesting ideas, data, or unusual approaches to study the phenomenon of dreaming.

We want to thank all people (authors, referees, copyeditors, editorial board members) who helped us to create and maintain the International Journal of Dream Research. As this open access journal is free of charges for the authors, all work is done on a voluntary basis. We hope that interest in the journal will continue to increase and researchers will send in their findings to be published in the International Journal of Dream Research.

References