

# Are Dream Experiences Truly Novel?

## A Philosophical Inquiry into Thompson's Thesis

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### Summary

*In this paper, I will delve into Evan Thompson's analysis of dream experiences, which has challenged philosophers and scholars in the past. Many thinkers argue that dreams are not conscious experiences; there is an opposite view in which philosophers still argue for dreams as conscious phenomena. The paper primarily focuses on the hypothesis: 'Thompson's explication of dreams as conscious experiences.' Philosophers like Norman Malcolm and Daniel Dennett critique the eminent received view of dreaming, asserting that dream experiences lack conscious awareness. However, recent philosophical contributions by Thompson criticize their standpoint and posit that dreams are conscious experiences with an independent status during sleep. The paper navigates this philosophical conflict, and I have specifically taken a defence examining Thompson's explication of dream consciousness, emphasizing the metaphysical and ontological bases of dreams. Lastly, I discuss the limitations of his analysis and also propose a tripartite model of the dynamic nature of our dreaming mind.*

Keywords: *access consciousness; conscious experiences; dreams; phenomenal consciousness; sleep; Evan Thompson*

### Introduction

Dreams have been relevant to philosophical discussion and enquiry for centuries, captivating human imagination from the earliest recorded moments in history.<sup>1</sup> Dreaming has gathered more philosophical attention throughout the 20th century, transforming discussions around issues in the philosophy of mind. Philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists hold many different views on dream consciousness and dream experiences.<sup>2</sup> Many philosophers do not believe

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1 For a general overview of dream consciousness, please look at Hobson (2002), Windt (2015) and Rosen (2024).

2 Dreams are a series of thoughts, feelings, noises, or images that cross our minds as we sleep, offering a unique conscious experience. Dreaming is a heightened state of awareness in which

dreams are conscious experiences, whereas the opposing view emphasizes that dreams must be recognized as conscious phenomena (Windt, 2019). Some philosophers have been skeptical of the ontology of dreams in real life because real-life experiences differ from dream experiences.<sup>3</sup>

In early modern philosophy, René Descartes (2008) mentioned a dream argument in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (first published 1641), which states that dreams and the waking world may contain the same information. He claims there is enough similarity between the two experiences to regularly deceive dreamers into thinking they are genuinely awake while they are asleep and dreaming. However, on the other hand, extensive evidence has been provided to argue that dreams are not experiences, perceptions, sights, ideas, illusions, or deceptions experienced while one is asleep. We would assume that someone was lying in bed awake if they said they felt cold, heard bells ringing, or dreamed of being a renowned actor while in bed the previous night. Norman Malcolm (1956; 1959) and Daniel Dennett (1976) are proponents of this view. They criticized the received view of dreaming and were critical of the idea that dreaming is a conscious experience during sleep. Dream experiences, for them, during sleep, are not conscious experiences, as they question whether the content of dreams can genuinely be considered as part of conscious experience.

In this paper, I aim to discuss Evan Thompson's (2015) analysis of dream experiences, which challenges the skepticism regarding the conscious nature of dreams. His analysis tends to reconsider the notion that dreams lack consciousness; instead, he proposes that dreams are a genuine state of consciousness. In doing so, his theory aligns itself with the received view of dreaming, which regards dream experiences during sleep as having their independent status. Lastly, I argue that his analysis makes a strong case, but it is also not without limitations. It undermines the decentered and fractured nature of unstable nature of self during dreaming. I argue that dream experiences represent a kind of decentered self-awareness that also challenges Thompson's thesis. This enquiry at last aims to move the debate beyond the distinction between 'conscious vs. unconscious,' toward a more comprehensive understanding of dreams.

### *1. Dream Skepticism Revisited*

The debate regarding the question 'Are dreams conscious experiences' has been a concern for the philosophers of mind. The received view of dreaming is accepted by philosophers such as Aristotle, Descartes, Flanagan (2000), Windt (2015), and many others. This view refers to that dreams are a pure form of mental activity that occurs during sleep. It suggests that dreams are internal experiences that are disconnected from external reality but represent a genuine mode of awa-

images and fantasies, as well as memories and present worries, are used to develop imaginative theories.

3 The films *Inception* and *Matrix* gave a beautiful portrayal of dream experiences.

renewal. Flanagan (2000) is one such philosopher who has agreed with this view and argues that dreams are a natural phenomenon involving the same mental states as wakefulness. He contends that dreams are subjective experiences but argues that they are nonetheless genuine mental phenomena occurring during sleep (Flanagan, 2000, 20).<sup>4</sup>

Norman Malcolm, in his works *Dreaming* (1959) and *Dreaming and Skepticism* (1956), challenged the notion of the received view of dreaming. Malcolm challenges this view by creating a sharp discontinuity between waking and dreaming experiences, suggesting that there might be a continuum between waking and dreaming experiences. Dreams, for Malcolm, are singular, unexplainable phenomena. He rejects the idea that dreams are made up of ideas, sensations, feelings, images, and other such elements. According to him, dreams, if considered to be conscious experiences during sleep for a definite time and duration, are »unintelligible« (Malcolm, 1959, 52). He points out that »dream reports are insufficient to believe the metaphysical claim that dreaming consciously takes place during sleep« (Malcolm, 1959, 53). It is implied that the dream is experienced through the recounting of its elements, rather than while the dream is experienced during sleep. He continues to defend his position by emphasizing that there is no factual proof that a person was conscious during the dream if they wake up remembering it. This challenges the received view's assertion that we remember dreams in all truthfulness, and they are real experiences.

Like Malcolm, Daniel Dennett has also criticized the received view of dreaming in his work *Are Dreams Experiences?* (1976) by proposing the cassette theory of dreaming. In this theory, he analyses the processing of the brain during sleep and asserts that dreams are »not consciously experienced, but merely unconsciously recorded in subsequent recall« (Dennett, 1976, 166). Dennett's theory entails an analysis of anecdotal and clinically documented dream reports in which the content of the dream's climax — the instant just before or during awakening — seems to be significantly influenced by the external stimuli that cause the dreamer to wake up. As an example, a loud sound in the room could mean that the dreamer gets shot just as they wake up, or, to quote Dennett (1976, 157) himself, »the sound of a goat bleating rhythmically matches up perfectly with the sound of the alarm clock waking him up«. It seems puzzling how the dream report of such examples can build up the climactic movement while keeping the internal stimuli — that is, suddenly, turning the bleating goat into an alarm clock ringing. The cassette theory suggests that dream narratives are not fully constructed during sleep but rather at the moment of awakening.

The *cassette theory* is opposite to the received view by challenging the notion that dreams are a conscious experience. Dennett (1976, 157) argues that dreams as conscious experiences are just illusions which are created by unconscious memory loading processes, which we can access only when we are awake. This skepticism regarding the received view is compatible with Malcolm's criticism. He

4 He calls them spandrels and guardians of sleep.

argues that concepts of sleep and consciousness are incompatible, making the notion of consciousness during dreaming epistemologically problematic (Malcolm, 1959, 52). While the received view interprets dreams as a genuine mode of experience during sleep, the *cassette theory* suggests they are a kind of retrospective construction.<sup>5</sup> In the next sections, I will discuss contemporary analysis and arguments by Thompson, who views dreams as conscious and genuine experiences.

## 2. Thompson's Historical Analysis of Dream Consciousness

### 2.1. A more comprehensive and nuanced perspective

A plethora of divergent descriptions of the concepts of dreaming and dreams are readily available to us in the philosophical and psychological literature for debates and discussions. However, in the scope of this paper, particular attention will be given to a more contemporary definition of dreaming offered by Evan Thompson in his book *Waking, Dreaming, Being* (2015). There are two reasons for this leapfrogging: First, there appears to be no compelling necessity to prioritize any particular plausible description, considering the lack of consensus within the philosophical community on a definitive account thus far. Second, and perhaps more crucially, Thompson's proposition is not only articulated persuasively but also presents a thorough analysis of the concept of 'dreaming' and its metaphysical and ontological foundations. Thompson's perspective is also significant due to its alignment with the perspectives of the *Advaita Vedānta* and *Yoga* traditions of Indian philosophy regarding consciousness, dreaming, and the self. According to this alignment, dreams are characterized as 'conscious experiences' and 'spontaneous imaginative experiences,' depicting the interconnected nature of our consciousness. In this sense, I think Thompson's work, in this sense, provides us a comprehensive understanding of the nature of consciousness, the self, and the subjective experiences of dreaming.

### 2.2. The concepts of 'consciousness'

Thompson (2015, 18) has presented an in-depth analysis of the concepts of 'consciousness,' stating that »consciousness is that which is luminous, knowing, and reflexive. Consciousness is that which makes manifest appearances, is able to apprehend them in one way or another, and in so doing is self-appearing and prereflectively self-aware«. According to him, the three terms which define consciousness are luminosity, knowing, and reflexivity. 'Luminosity' refers to having the ability to shine light on things. The sun may cast darkness upon our world when absent, yet existence itself hinges on consciousness. Since consciousness is an essential prerequisite for appearance, it is essentially that which reveals or

5 For more reflections on Malcolm's and Dennett's views on dreams as not conscious experiences, see Rosen (2024, chapter 3).

manifests.<sup>6</sup> ‘Knowing’ means being able to capture whatever is presented to us. We grasp or comprehend something in a particular way when we are aware of it. We see a certain arrangement of colour and light, which we recognize as a sunset. ‘Reflexivity’ is when consciousness is fundamentally a form of self–luminosity; it can be said to be self–witnessing, self–manifesting, or self–revealing.

This thorough and intricate depiction of consciousness applies to both dream and waking states; however, the primary focus of this paper is exclusively on the realm of dream consciousness. Thompson makes an important distinction between ‘gross’ and ‘subtle’ forms of consciousness as a means to offer a precise characterization of dreams. In his view, ‘gross’ consciousness refers to the more tangible and perceptible aspects of consciousness associated with the waking state, involving everyday sensory experiences, thoughts, and external awareness. For instance, the waking experience of objects present in the outside world, such as the paper we are currently reading, conveys sensations and information to our conscious mind, creating an awareness of the external world. ‘Subtle’ consciousness, on the other hand, refers to the more abstract, refined, or less tangible aspects of consciousness associated with the dreaming state, involving subtle perceptions, emotions, and cognitive processes that are not as overt or readily apparent. Dreaming, for example, is a form of subtler consciousness as it entails more abstract, symbolic, and emotional elements that are not easily defined. In dreaming, we do not experience the outside world; instead, we create an internal world based on our imagination and memory. What manifests or emerges during a dream state are mental images. They appear to us as real objects outside of ourselves in an ordinary dream, and we are unable to identify or comprehend them as such. In this sense, our knowledge is misknowing, and our comprehension is misapprehension. Images also surface in lucid dreams — a state where there is an awareness of the dreaming state — however, in these dreams, we possess the ability to recognize these images as elements of the dream and can consciously interpret or reflect on our present condition as being within a dream state. »In both kinds of dream state, consciousness relies heavily on memory and other conceptual and imagery–related processes. Thus, the dream state is that state in which consciousness apprehends the inner world of mental images« (Thompson, 2015, 15). So, dream consciousness understands the dream body as the self and is related to mental representations formed from memories. To put it more precisely, dreams cause awareness to turn inwards, making our consciousness experience the dream ego as the self. Dreaming consciousness appreciates the dream images formed through ‘subtle’ mental impressions arising from past experiences and memories. Dreaming is a restless condition for him because desire and attention are always shifting, much like when we are awake.

This description of dreaming implies that dreaming is a real conscious experience that occurs during sleep, as opposed to Malcolm and Dennett, in the form of mental images withdrawn from the outside world. Similar to waking perception,

6 This capacity of the mind is referred to as ‘Intentionality’ in the Western philosophical tradition.

dreaming consciousness unveils and apprehends the world within us. Thompson discusses a transitional state between wakefulness and sleep, which he refers to as a ‘hypnagogic’ state. The hypnagogic state is characterized by the emergence of peculiar visuals before our eyes, accompanied by the perception of auditory cues or what seems to be internal or external dialogue. In contrast to the ego-structured state of regular waking consciousness, which allows us to perceive ourselves as limited entities separate from the outer world, this structure vanishes during the hypnagogic state. There is no greater universe in which we feel submerged, nor is there an ego in the sense of an ‘I’ that participates in a larger one. Rather, a kaleidoscope of sounds and images captivates consciousness. The breakdown of ego boundaries and the focus on what consciousness naturally imagines are, in essence, the two main characteristics that characterize the hypnagogic state. In the dream state, the ego structure of awareness reappears. When we are in a hypnagogic state, we gaze at images and become engrossed in them; when we dream, we feel like we are in a dream world.

Thompson (2015, 130) takes a step forward and describes the dream experiences in the sense of first-person-perspective, that is, ‘field memory,’ and third-person-perspective, that is, ‘observer memory’. They both relate to the point that we see things from the perspective of our own or the outside point of view. In the ‘field’ mode, we remember what transpired from within, whereas in the ‘observer’ mode, we are an outsider looking in on ourselves. While observer memories contain more details about our appearance, activities, and locations, field memories contain more details about our psychological states, bodily experiences, and emotional responses. We can consider a recent dream and ask ourselves: ‘Does our dream memory appear to us in the field or observer mode of memory?’ In the field mode of memory, we remember a dream in which we experienced events through the perspective of our dream body. Suppose we can recall the sensation of our pursuer behind us and the act of watching them chase us as we looked back. In the event that we can recall seeing ourselves run away, our dream is likely in the observer mode, and we are observing ourselves from the outside (Thompson, 2015, 131–132). We nevertheless perceive ourselves as subjects placed in relation to the dream environment, even in the situation of observer viewpoint in a dream.

### 3. *Contemporary Analysis*

#### 3.1. *The dream ego and the dream self*

In the light of lucid dreaming,<sup>7</sup> the viewpoint changes. It becomes imperative to make a clear distinction between the dream ego and dream self, which are

7 Lucid dreaming represents a captivating phenomenon wherein individuals gain consciousness of their dream state. Within the realm of lucid dreaming, dreamers typically acknowledge that the events unfolding are not real and are occurring within the realm of a dream. They understand that the unfolding events are mere products of their imagination, acknowledging that they are,

‘self-within-the-dream’ and ‘self-as-dreamer’ respectively. We identify with our dream ego and believe that ‘we are flying’ when we have a nonlucid dream. When we have lucid dreams, we acknowledge that ‘we are dreaming’ and that our actual selves, or our dream egos, are not the same. The dreaming self is the dream ego’s user, similar to an avatar in a virtual environment. Computers are required to build virtual worlds with avatars, but an individual’s imagination — the capacity to conjure up mental images and imagine other worlds — is all that is needed to form dream egos in dream worlds. Being able to focus attention on the dreamy character of the state and consider it to be a dream is what distinguishes a lucid dream. Nonlucid dreams lack the kind of cognitive control with which we can regain consciousness in lucid dreaming. This is explained by Windt and Metzinger (2007, 212) as they state, »the dreaming subject isn’t an effective metacognitive subject of experience. In a dream, it’s difficult to conceptualize and experience yourself as a self in the act of deciding (a volitional subject), a self in the act of attending (attentional subject), a self in the act of thinking (a cognitive subject), or a self in the grip of emotion (an affective subject)«. This means that, in ordinary dreams, it is impossible to perceive oneself as a dreaming subject if we do not have insight into the nature of our continuous conscious state. The level of meta-awareness known as ‘lucid’ dreaming allows us to focus our attention deliberately, stay in the current moment, or even come back to life. Consequently, we are able to recognize that we are dreaming when we are actually dreaming. We see what we see, hear, and feel as dream imagery and consider ourselves to be dreamers. In this sense, when we sleep, we have the ability to perceive ourselves as dreaming subjects. Lucid dreaming is characterized by this type of ‘self-experience.’ The sense of self changes as a result, and one starts to recognize themselves as both the dreamer — ‘I’m dreaming’ — and the dreamed — ‘I’m flying in my dream’ (Thompson, 2015, 109). So, lucid dreaming makes us experience both our dream ego and dream self within the dream.

Thompson highlights that ego structure gets weakened in the hypnagogic state, leading to dream immersion, where the self that one embodies within the dream narrative becomes deeply absorbed and involved in the dream scenario, to the extent that the boundaries between the dream and waking reality become blurred. When we are in a hypnagogic state, we become engrossed in visual patterns. When we dream, we undergo the experience of existing within the dream or, more precisely, in the dream world. Dreams revive the sensation of being oneself in a world, a feeling inherent in the waking state but diminished during the hypnagogic state. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his *The Imaginary*, describes this in the chapter titled *The Dream* as: »It also frequently happens that dreams — mine, for example — are given at first as a story that I am reading or being told. And then, all of a sudden, I am identified with one of the people of the story, which becomes my story« (as cited from Thompson, 2015, 165–166). We always

in essence, immersed in a dream. In this sense, the lucidity of dreams refers to the cognitive awareness or reflective consciousness that one is within a dream (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1991).

feel immersed in dreams, whether we look from the perspective of our dream body's eyes or the outsider's point of view. For example, whenever we wake up in terror, like from a nightmare, we know we are fully immersed in the dream world as we experience ourselves as the dream body. When we see ourselves in a dream as someone else, it is like seeing an actor play a part on screen that just so happens to be us. Perhaps the ideal partner bears no similarity to us, or perhaps they are exactly like us in every way. Even though we have never met this person before, we can nevertheless tell as observers that we recognize them as being us. So, in the dream state, whether from a 'field' or 'observer' perspective, we imagine a world existing and recognize ourselves as our dream ego submerged in it (we are in the dream world) (Thompson, 2015, 127–128).

The concept of 'lucid' dreaming offers the most effective framework for elucidating conscious experiences during sleep.<sup>8</sup> This is an important concept while critiquing the arguments presented by Dennett and Malcolm against the received view. However, Thompson has provided compelling reasoning to address a particular issue related to this perspective. The problem arises: 'Why does lucid dreaming go beyond being a dream inside a dream?' The distinguishing feature of lucid dreaming from ordinary dreaming is that we are aware of both being a dreamer and dreamed. When we are in a state of nonlucidity, then there is a lack of mental clarity, and we are not able to direct our attention clearly to the dreamlike quality of the images. If there is too much absorption into the dreams, then this state can be known as 'dreaming we're dreaming.' As Andreas Mavromatis (1987, 106) notes in his book *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness between Wakefulness and Sleep* — »The experience of being conscious in one's dream has a very different status from that of dreaming that one is conscious of one's dream«. The distinction is specifically related to attention and meta-awareness: to be aware of our dream, we must be able to explicitly attend to the state's dreamlike aspect. We can only be certain that we are dreaming if we are able to watch or examine the dream state in this manner. In a lucid dream, a dreamer does not suffer from cognitive deficiencies like poor working memory, unable to observe or direct attention, etcetera. A dreamer realizes themselves in an ongoing conscious state and experiences themselves as dreaming subjects (Thompson, 2015, 152). As philosophers Windt and Metzinger (2007, 212–213) explain — »the fact that you're dreaming is not only cognitively available — you're able to think about the fact that you're currently dreaming — it's also attentionally available — you can attend directly to the dreamlike character of your experience«. This allows us to remember things from our daily life, perhaps even dreams from the past, and to also realize that we are lying in bed. Because of these characteristics, 'lucid' dreaming feels very different from 'dreaming we're dreaming.'

8 For more discussions on lucid dreaming, see LaBerge & Rheingold (1991), Green & McCreery (1994) and LaBerge (2009).

### 3.2. 'Phenomenal' and 'Access' consciousness

Thompson also provides the account 'phenomenal' and 'access' consciousness to define the term 'conscious.' One may argue that anything is mindful of us when it manifests itself in some way in our experience. Two classic instances of conscious experiences include experiencing pain or seeing the colour red. There is 'something it's like' when we experience pain or see colour. According to this definition, a mental or physical state is conscious when the individual is aware of what it feels like to be in that condition. This is referred to as 'phenomenal' consciousness, where the word phenomenal refers to the way that experiences look or appear to us. However, we can also say that something is conscious of us if we can describe it, report it, think about it, or utilize it as a direction for our actions. This is known as 'access' consciousness, where access denotes the ability to be used in both thought and deed. In short, »consciousness can mean awareness in the sense of subjective experience or awareness in the sense of cognitive access« (Thompson, 2015, 7).

When we apply these terms in the context of dreaming, we know that we are 'phenomenally' conscious when we dream. However, 'access' consciousness is a state in which we have cognitive access to the content of our dreams. Most people may dream throughout the night, but still might not have the cognitive access; they may not be able to report or recall them. During dreaming, dreamers experience a wide range of experiences and emotions, indicating a highly active state of phenomenal consciousness. Since dreams frequently involve reduced or changed versions of the rational and reflective cognitive processes that define waking life, access consciousness may be restricted. Upon awakening, dreamers may continue to experience 'phenomenal' consciousness as they remember and consider the vivid sensations from their dreams. As individuals try to bring the content of their dreams into wakefulness, they frequently create memories of their dreams or incorporate dream aspects into conscious thought, which makes access consciousness more noticeable. In ordinary dreams, we only have phenomenal consciousness because we might or might not be able to report them, because the dream content is not cognitively available to us. We may have both the 'phenomenal' and 'access' consciousness when we start to dream lucidly, as it is known as 'waking up consciously in dreams.' Lucid dreams allow us to direct our attention and cognitively think through our dreams. In this, individuals might have the same reflexivity and cognitive access as waking experience. However, sometimes, we might not be able to report lucid dreams as well due to certain exceptions like mental illness or hallucinations (Srivastava, 2025, 11–13).

Dreaming is a real conscious experience during sleep, whether 'phenomenal' or 'access' consciousness, and there are both the dream self and the dream ego. We are completely immersed in a dream, whether it is a 'field' or 'observer' memory. Therefore, according to Thompson, what exactly is a dream? A dream isn't a random false perception; it's a spontaneous mental simulation, a way of imagining ourselves a world (Thompson, 2015, 184). Lastly, I argue that Thompson's analysis does not fully capture the instability and multiplicity of the dream self.

#### 4. *Beyond Thompson: Limitations and Tripartite Model*

Thompson (2015, 184) states that »dreaming is a spontaneous mental simulation, a way of imagining ourselves a world«. Yet this »imagining of ourselves« requires further analysis and scrutiny. Who is this »self« that dreams, and how is it experienced within the dream? I argue with the help of Metzinger’s (2003) self–model theory that the self in dreams is not unitary but decentered. Individuals, while dreaming, often tend to make a shift between first–person (field) and third–person (observer) perspectives. Dreamers may experience themselves as a distinct person altogether by positing multiple characters. Similarly, they may observe themselves from the outside or may fail to recognize themselves at all. This suggests that dreaming involves not only altered consciousness, but also an altered self–model, wherein agency, embodiment, and memory tend to become unstable. Similarly, in *Advaita Vedānta*, the dreaming self (*tajasa*) is considered a misapprehension of the pure self (*ātman*), veiled by *vāsanās* (latent impressions). This view aligns with Thompson’s view of dreaming as mis–knowing, but Advaita goes further by positing that the ego itself is illusory in all states. The fragmentation of self in dreams becomes a revelation of its illusory coherence in waking life.<sup>9</sup>

From the above descriptions and combining them, I finally propose a tripartite model of dream consciousness that captures the layered and dynamic nature of the dreaming mind: (1) *Phenomenal Dreaming* — This refers to the vivid and immersive nature of our experiences during non–lucid dreams; they tend to be sensory–rich. In this state, the dreamer lacks awareness that the experience is a dream. The dream world feels real, and the dream ego is deeply absorbed in the unfolding narrative. Though lacking cognitive access or memory integration, this mode exemplifies ‘what it is like’ to be conscious while asleep (Nagel, 1974). (2) *Decentered Dreaming* — In this state, the dream self is unstable, fragmented, or oscillating between perspectives. Dreamers may shift between first–person (field) and third–person (observer) perspectives, become multiple selves, or encounter themselves as others. This state illustrates a loss of narrative and personal coherence and reflects the instability of self–representation (for further reflections on self–representation, see Rosen & Sutton, 2013). (3) *Meta–Lucid Dreaming* — This highest mode of dream awareness involves reflexivity and cognitive control. The dreamer not only recognizes the dream state but can act volitionally within it, sometimes recalling waking–life intentions. Meta–lucid dreams are marked by access consciousness: one is aware of dreaming, aware of being aware, and can often reflect on the implications or nature of the dream (for discussion on meta–cognition and lucid dreams, see Rosen, 2024, chapters 1 and 2).

This tripartite model, which I suggest here expands Thompson’s analysis by highlighting the dynamic and complex nature of our dreams. This model acknowledges that dreams are conscious experiences, as opposed to Malcolm

9 For more reflections on dream consciousness in *Advaita Vedānta*, see Indich (1980), Fort (1985), and Sharma (2004).

and Dennett. However, at the same time, it posits that dreams are often fragmented and decentered, which requires further analysis of what Thompson suggests.

### *Conclusion*

To sum up, I have dwelled on the phenomenon of dream experiences analyzed by Thompson and mainly concentrated on their conscious nature and metaphysical implications. The debate for centuries regarding dream consciousness seems to continue, but now there is this very compelling viewpoint of Thompson that adds counterpoints to the reigning notion of dreams being void of conscious awareness. His explication of dreams as conscious experiences challenges the traditional perspective of consciousness as exclusively tied to waking life. He argues that dreams are a genuine mode of experience during sleep, which are characterized by their own unique phenomenology and subjective quality. I think Thompson's analysis of dreams in alignment with Eastern traditions thus proves to be a precious addition to understanding dream consciousness, imagination, and even the nature of reality.

Furthermore, some criticisms have to be recognized, especially regarding the limitations of his analysis. Though I think he had strong arguments for dreams being a product of consciousness, more and more empirical research is needed to understand the nature of the self during dream experiences. Lastly, his analysis tends to overlook the structural instability and fragmentation of the dreaming self. I proposed a tripartite model in which dream experiences are best understood as a layered phenomenon and help us understand the dynamic nature of dreams beyond Thompson. Dreams not only simulate worlds; they simulate selves, beyond the boundaries of conscious/unconscious debate.

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*Jesu li iskustva snova uistinu nova?*

*Filozofsko istraživanje Thompsonove teze*

*Ayush Srivastava\**

*Summary*

*U ovome članku autor proučava analizu iskustva snova prema Evan Thompsonu, koja je u prošlosti predstavljala izazov za filozofe i znanstvenike. Mnogi mislioci smatraju da snovi nisu svjesna iskustva; međutim, postoji i suprotan pogled obzirom da filozofi i dalje tvrde da su snovi svjesni fenomeni. Članak se oslanja na hipotezu: “Thompsonovo tumačenje snova kao svjesna iskustva.” Filozofi, kao primjerice Norman Malcolm i Daniel Dennett analiziraju dominantno prihvaćen pogled na snove te potvrđuju da iskustvima snova nedostaje svjesna spoznaja. Međutim, noviji filozofski doprinosi od strane Thompsona kritiziraju njihovo stajalište te tvrde da su snovi svjesna iskustva sa samostalnim statusom za vrijeme sna. Članak prati ovaj filozofski sukob, a autor članka zauzima obrambeno stajalište u svojim razlaganjima o svjesnosti snova, naglašavajući metafizičke i ontološke osnove snova. Na kraju se raspravlja o granicama njegove analize te se predlaže trodijelni model dinamičke naravi uma koji sanja.*

*Ključne riječi: pristup svjesnosti; svjesna iskustva; snovi; fenomenalna svijest; san; Thompson*

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