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IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER: UNCOVERING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROSPECTIVELY REPORTED SPONTANEOUS PRECOGNITIVE DREAMS

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ABSTRACT

Previous research on the characteristics of precognitive dream experiences has largely been based upon retrospectively reported dreams, which may be susceptible to various reporting biases. The present study compared prospective and retrospective precognitive dreams with non-precognitive dreams. A dream registry was opened for a sixteen month period of collection of prospective precognitive dream and event reports and ratings from a selected sample of individuals reporting prior precognitive dream experience. The original registry participants as well as additional recruits then rated their retrospective precognitive and non-precognitive dreams on the same dimensions. The pattern of findings, when comparing the three types of dreams, suggests that reporting biases affect the survey and case collection literature. Prospective precognitive dreams did not share a particular phenomenological 'marker'. We were unable to assess changes over time in the degree of similarity between prospective precognitive dreams and matching events because independent judges did not agree on similarity ratings, suggesting that the interpretation of a dream as precognitive is quite personal to the experient.