

DO_OBE

**ASTRAL PROJECTION/OOBE CLASS NOTES,
CONDUCTED ON THE COMPUSERVE NEW AGE
FORUM**

BY
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Astral Projection Class on CompuServe
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i. Introduction

You are reading a relatively comprehensive lesson on how to achieve astral projections/OOBES. The file you are reading (DO_OBE.PDF) is the version of this book being released in cyberspace in Adobe Acrobat 4.0 format. A text file (unformatted) version of do_obe (DO_OBE.TXT) is available, and information for obtaining the unformatted version can be obtained by going to the web link:

<http://www.geocities.com/ddegraci/index.html>

This file was written as notes for an on-line class I gave in the New Age forum on CompuServe during May and June of 1994. I am releasing these notes to the Public Domain essentially as a free book on how to lucid dream/astral project/OBE. Please note however that all of the material is copyrighted.

I hope you will find this material useful and enjoyable. I have stressed a practical approach to inducing astral projections/OOBES while at the same time trying to provide a reasonable balance between differing views of this phenomena.

ii. Distribution

Please feel free to upload DO-OBE.PDF, **as long as it is complete and unmodified**, to anywhere you wish.

ii. Contacting the author

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iv. About the author

Since 1987, I've had numerous lucid dreams/projections, OBEs or whatever you want to call it. I'm an avid student of occultism, science, history, social science, philosophy and Marvel comic books. My whole orientation towards the OOBES involves a point of view that seeks to synthesize scientific and occult knowledge. I have a Bachelors of Science degree in chemistry,

and a Ph.D. in neurophysiology. I work as a biochemical researcher in the field of cerebral ischemia and reperfusion, and has published a number of papers in this area.

v. Special thanks

Special thanks goes to my wonderful wife Kathy, who had the patience and excellent grammar skills to proof and edit these notes. Thanks also goes out to Jeff Wiley, a fellow traveler/dreamer for his helpful suggestions, and to Rilla Moulden for giving me the impetus to write these notes.

I. WHAT IS ASTRAL PROJECTION?

A. Introduction:

Before saying anything else I would like to thank and congratulate everyone who is taking this class. Whether you know it or not, by taking an interest in achieving the types of experience we will discuss here, you are opening yourself up to a greatly expanded view of yourself and the life and world around you. Hopefully, by the end of this class you will have a deep appreciation of what I mean in saying this. I wish everyone the best of luck!

B. What Is Astral Projection?

Just what exactly is astral projection? Well, we can get very academic and erudite about this, and we will do this to some extent below. But for now, for starters, what we want to do is lay out a definition of astral projection that is **practical**. There are numerous ways we can view and define astral projection, but the most central point is that it is an **experience**, a special type of experience. No matter how you look at it, astral projection is an **altered state of consciousness**.

So, what is an altered state of consciousness? Well, it is a state of consciousness that is NOT our normal waking state of consciousness.

There is one altered state with which we are all very, very familiar and that is the dreams we experience when we sleep at night. Dreaming itself is an altered state of consciousness. And, as we will see as we progress, dreaming and astral projection are very closely related states of consciousness.

Now, astral projection goes under a variety of names. Some other names for the astral projection experience are the following: 1. lucid dreaming, and 2. out-of-body experiences (OOBEs). Some people will debate that astral projections, lucid dreams and OOBEs are different things. We will discuss these distinctions below. However, I want to stress that such distinctions amount to splitting hairs, and are not that important. For our purposes, I will use these 3 terms interchangeably. That is, whether I say "astral projection", "lucid dream" or "OOBE", I am referring to the same thing. Actually, I will probably use OOBE a lot since it is the easiest to type. What is really important is not what we call the experience, but **LEARNING FOR YOURSELF HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS EXPERIENCE**. And everything I will stress here is geared to this all important end.

So, for the sake of gearing all this to helping you actually have an OOBE, there are two main things we will focus on: theory and practice. You need to understand both. Either alone is useless. Theory by itself is just empty talk. Practice without theory just leads to confusion, and in the case of OOBEs, it can lead to real psychological danger as well. By themselves, OOBEs are NOT dangerous. However, if you don't know what you are doing, they can be. So, you need the theory to understand what is going on, and you need the practice to put the theory into action. So, in this course, we will cover both: theory and practice. However, as you will see, I personally

lean much more towards the practical, and this is what I will stress throughout. We will pay lip service to theory, but again, theory is useless without putting action behind the ideas.

Finally, I want to say this: I will attempt in these lessons to make the information I provide as self-contained as I can. That is, I want to really try to provide a comprehensive overview of OOBEs and really give you your money's worth. However, there is just a tremendous amount of information related to OOBEs. For example, some related topics are the following: human psychology, dreams, occultism, religion, mysticism and science. I hope, that after reading these notes, you will get some idea that all of these topics are related to OOBEs. I am providing an annotated bibliography of books that I feel provide useful study. And I really encourage everyone to look through this bibliography and to actually read some of the books listed there. The more you know about OOBEs, the better. That's all there is to it!

C. Different Views of Astral Projections.

So, having said my introductory remarks, let's look at the various ways people define astral projections/OOBEs/lucid dreams. Basically, we can divide up the various viewpoints as follows: 1. occult views, and 2. scientific views. Within each of these broad views are a number of sub-viewpoints, and we will mention each of these at least briefly.

1. Occult Views

Within the camp of occult views, we can divide this into Western and Eastern occult views. However, what is nice here is that Eastern and Western occultism are very similar. One may find differences in small details, but the general viewpoints are very similar.

Now, the term "astral projection" comes from occult views of this experience. This term implies that what the experience is the projection of one's self to the astral *plane*. Occultists teach that the universe is a series of planes of matter and that the physical world we perceive with our senses is but one of a series of, usually seven, planes. This is one assumption of the occult view of the world. Here is a list of the important ideas in the occult world-view that will allow us to understand what the term "astral projection" means:

1. Occultists teach that our consciousness transcends our physical body.
2. Occultists teach that each of us is an immortal soul who has temporarily
3. incarnated into the physical world.
4. Occultists teach that the universe is a series of planes. Each plane is a world unto itself.
5. Occultists teach that each of us has facilities for interacting with at least 4 of these planes. These facilities are called "vehicles" or "bodies" and we have four of them: a physical body for interacting with the physical world (or plane), an astral body for

interacting with the astral world/plane, a mental body for interacting with the mental world/plane and a buddhic body for interacting with the buddhic world/plane.

Before we go into these ideas in more detail, let me say this. To an occultist, the act of astral projecting entails transferring one's consciousness to the astral body and exploring the astral plane. And also let me say that, as far as theory goes, this is the theory I ascribe to. Generally speaking, the occult ideas are the most practical ideas you can use to understand what is happening to you when you have an OOB. So, let's go into these ideas a little deeper and spell out their implications. For further reading on these topics, see the books by Charles Leadbeater and Annie Besant in the bibliography.

First thing that needs to be said: the occult ideas fly in the face of everything we've been taught about what it is to be a human being here in America in the late 20th century. According to our **common** social beliefs, we are either atheists/materialists who do not think there is any such thing as a "soul", or we were raised with simple-minded ideas about God, Heaven and Hell. Occult ideas challenge both of these viewpoints, and the beauty of learning to astral project is that you put yourself in a position to determine who is right and wrong on these issues. So, if the following ideas are unfamiliar to you, please be prepared to have your concepts about reality greatly expanded!

The basis of occult teachings is this: the senses of our physical body; our ears, eyes, taste, feeling, senses of heat and balance, smell, these senses define for us the physical world. That is to say, our physical senses, **by definition**, only allow us to perceive the physical world. However, according to occult teachings, THERE ARE ENERGIES THAT EXIST THAT WE CANNOT PERCEIVE WITH OUR PHYSICAL SENSES. In a nutshell, this idea underlies all of occultism, including whatever particular school of thought you like best (i.e., Theosophy, Hermetics, Paganism, Alchemy, etc., etc.).

Now, the idea that energies exist that we cannot perceive is no big news. Everyone knows about x-rays, about radioactivity, about ultra-violet radiation. These energies we can detect with machines, but not with our physical senses. However, where the occultist "goes over the edge", so to speak, is with the claim that WE HUMANS CAN PERCEIVE THESE ENERGIES WITHOUT THE AID OF MACHINES. However, to understand this we need to go into the ideas of the vehicles/bodies, ideas that fall under the heading of "occult anatomy".

Occult anatomy is the idea stated above, that we humans have more bodies than we can directly perceive: that we have, not only a physical body, but an astral body, a mental body and a buddhic body, as well. Each of these bodies exists on its respective plane. So, before we can go off about the bodies, we must discuss the idea of the planes.

The occult planes of nature can be thought of as occult physics. For the idea of the planes posits that there are whole worlds of energies beyond the ken of our perception, energies of which modern scientists are completely ignorant.

Again, we are flying in the face of common knowledge. Sure, scientists grant that there are x-rays, radioactivity, ultraviolet radiation, and even infinitely minute worlds of subatomic particles and neutrinos. But to say that there are whole worlds, full of life and activity and strange creatures,

that exist beyond the ken of our physical senses is a complete absurdity to the modern scientist. However, this is exactly what the planes are. Each plane is a world, a giant world full of all kinds of strange and exotic places and creatures with sights and sounds that dwarf anything we know of here in the physical world.

I should point out too that there are other names you might hear of that refer to the planes. Such terms are: "dimensions", "aethyrs", "lokas". "realms". Each of these terms essentially means "plane" or "world".

Now, again, and to keep your interest at this point, let me remind you that once you learn to astral project for yourself, then you can determine whether or not this is all so much fantasy and bs. Keeping this in mind, let's define these planes a little better.

In the most commonly accepted schemes of the planes, it is taught that there are seven planes and that we humans can access the 4 lowest planes. The common names of the seven planes are:

1. Physical Plane (which includes the Etheric Plane)
2. Astral Plane
3. Mental Plane
4. Buddhic Plane
5. Atmic Plane
6. Anupadaka Plane
7. Adi Plane

Now, let's define each of these planes.

1. **Physical Plane**. This is the world you are sitting in right now. The physical plane is the familiar world of our everyday life. In the occult scheme, there are aspects of the physical world that are invisible to our senses, and these invisible aspects of the physical plane are called the "Etheric plane". Above I mentioned x-rays, radioactivity, ultraviolet radiation and subatomic particles. In the occult world-view, these energies are "Etheric" energies, and again, this simply means these are energies of the physical plane that we cannot perceive with the senses of our physical body. As we will discuss below, and is actually quite important to the endeavor of astral projecting, occultists claim we have a body made of Etheric energies and they call this our "Etheric body". It is very likely that many of you will actually have experiences in your Etheric body once you start attempting to project. Again, this will all be explained in due course.

2. **The Astral Plane**. The astral plane is described of as a world of emotion and desire. On this plane our emotions and desires are actually *living creatures*. Also, according to occultists, the astral plane is where people go immediately after they die. "Dead people" (actually, "discarnate" people) do not stay forever on the astral plane, it is only a temporary stop after death. In this regard, the idea of "purgatory" is related to the idea of the astral plane.

Also on the astral plane are a whole host of creatures and inhabitants that are native to that plane, such as faires, devas, and other such things.

Believe it or not, according to occultists, the astral plane is also where we go at night when we dream. When you are in a dream, you are quite literally in the astral plane. This is a very important idea, and later on, when we begin discussing techniques for astral projecting, you will see how important this idea is.

3. **The Mental Plane**. The mental plane is the world of all thoughts and ideas. On the mental plane, thoughts are **REAL OBJECTS**, and these objects are called "THOUGHT-FORMS". "Thoughts are things" is a common idea in occultism, and this idea refers to the fact that thought-forms exist as real live things on the mental plane. The mental plane is a dynamically brilliant world of ever-shifting abstract landscapes of color, sound and sights that would probably make the ordinary person go stark raving mad if they could actually see the mental plane for what it is.

The mental plane overlaps substantially with the astral plane, and there is every good chance you will see numerous thought-forms as you learn to astral project. However, chances are very good that you will NOT ever perceive the mental plane as distinct from the astral plane, so chances are good you will never see the stuff that could make you lose your mind. The reason this is so is because it takes a lot of talent to get to the mental plane. I personally have never been there and am only describing to you what I have read about it. Again, we will say more about this throughout these notes.

4. **The Buddhic Plane**. According to occult ideas, this is the highest plane that we can access as humans, within the context of what we understand as a "human being". In effect, the buddhic plane is the realm of our soul. The energies of the buddhic plane that we use in our daily life are the following: inspiration, great creativity, compassion, wisdom, will-power. It is by these types of behaviors that the buddhic plane "leaks" into our regular physical lives.

In and of itself, the buddhic plane is supremely abstract and extremely powerful. Just like the mental plane, it is very unlikely that you will ever go to the buddhic plane in a projection. It takes even more talent to focus your consciousness exclusively on the buddhic plane than it does for the mental plane.

However, learning to access the energies of the buddhic plane will be critical for your continued success astral projecting. In a nutshell, the buddhic plane represents everything that makes human life good. The more of this you have in your aura (we will discuss aura below), the "lighter" you will be in your consciousness, and therefore, you will be able to travel through a broader range of the planes than otherwise. On the other hand, the less buddhic energy you have in your aura, the harder it will be for you to astral project, and as well, you will project into ugly regions of the planes, and in general, probably hurt yourself in the attempt to project. Maybe not hurt yourself physically, but emotionally and mentally.

Before going on about the "highest" three planes, I want to digress on what will be an important theme throughout these notes, and this is the place to do it; in the context of the buddhic plane. In effect, the buddhic plane is related to morals, wisdom and creativity. These are very important qualities no matter what activity you want to undertake. In this regard, astral projection is no exception.

Now, above, I said astral projection is only dangerous if you are ignorant about what is going on. Now it is time to explain what this means. You have to realize straight up that astral projection takes you into realms where the subjective becomes **ABSOLUTELY REAL**. All your ideas, fears, fantasies, become real things outside of you when you project. See, when you project, you will be somewhere, and in this somewhere (whether we call it a "plane" or whatever) all the things you think are subjective will become **objective**! What this means in practical terms is that, when you astral project, you will confront yourself, your own personality, in ways that are totally different than how you relate to yourself when awake here in the physical plane. For example, if you have phobias in your personality, these may become monsters that try to attack you in your astral projection. Such an experience will more likely than not scare the **** out of you, and, if you don't understand what's going on, such an experience may completely scare you away from astral projecting ever again. So, it's EXTREMELY important that you understand that, in a sense, during a projection, your personality is "outside" of you, and not "inside" of you as it appears to be here in the physical world. In a very strong sense, astral projecting is a form of therapy, of self-therapy.

When you initially begin to project, the first things you will encounter will be things of your own creation. Some authors refer to this as meeting the "dweller on the threshold". Again, this "Dweller" is all the petty, all the bad, all the fear that you have in you. I'm not lying about this either - it has happened to me. It's a stage you very likely will encounter. In a sense, all these negative elements of your personality are like a wall or room in the astral plane, that you will go to when you first begin to project. It is imperative that you realize that this is YOU. There is nothing to be afraid of because it IS you. You have complete control over these elements. YOU CAN BANISH THEM SIMPLY BY UNDERSTANDING THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE. Your consciousness of your self is like a healing fire that can burn away these negative elements by understanding them. Once you confront these negative aspects of your self, they will disappear and you will have grown with new self-insight. This growing is called "maturing", and occurs because of buddhic plane energies. It takes will-power to confront these things in yourself, and it takes wisdom and compassion to see them for what they are and to accept them.

So, one way or another, anyone aspiring to astral project will very likely be confronted with this "dweller on the threshold". By dealing with it, you get past it, and you grow. And then, after this first stage is passed, your experiences on the planes will not be as contaminated by personal factors. As the personal factors become less a part of your astral projection experiences, then your experiences there will reflect more clearly these planes as they objectively exist, uncontaminated by your subconscious influences. This process is like cleaning off a window. The cleaner the window is, the better you can see through it. Likewise, when you project, the cleaner your personality is, the better you will be able to see through it into the planes.

Which leads me to state an important idea I have not stated yet, and that is that the planes are extremely plastic. They are molded by your slightest emotion, desire or thought. The second you think something, a little piece of the mental plane is shaped exactly into your thought pattern, making a thought-form. This is exactly why your initial experiences projecting will be so extremely colored by your personality.

So, that's it for an introduction to the moral side of astral projecting. Unlike almost any other activity we humans know of, you CANNOT be a moral retard and succeed at projecting. You can be a moral retard (i.e. have no moral values whatsoever) in art, science, business (where you actually have an advantage!) or other activities of life, but you cannot if you want to succeed astral projecting. If you DO try to project and at the same time stay morally poverty stricken, well, it is then that astral projection **can** be dangerous. It is just built like this.

Though morals seem like subjective gobbly goop in our physical life, they are, in reality, the laws upon which our entire human existence is based. Just as we need to know the laws of gravity to build a spaceship, we likewise need to know the laws of moral behavior to succeed at ANY occult task. The only time occultism is dangerous is if you use it in an amoral fashion.

And don't worry, you don't need to follow a particular creed or dogma or anything like that. The beauty of astral projecting is that you will find out EXACTLY what YOU need to grow. You are unique, your needs are unique and so will be your projections. The messages they will contain will be EXACTLY what YOU need at whatever stage you are at in your life. Simply trust the process, go with it, and it will work fine. All you have to do is be honest with yourself. So, that said, let's get back to describing the planes:

5. **Atmic plane**. On this plane, what we think of as "human" no longer makes any sense. There are no individual personalities on this plane. Seth, from the Seth material by Jane Roberts, reflects what the Atmic plane is like. Here, consciousness exists as the simultaneous experience of a number of incarnations. Sure, we can say the concept easy enough, and even understand intellectually the idea. However, the actual direct experience of this state of consciousness is totally outside of our scope. Over our head! If you can get your consciousness to focus on this level, then "you" will no longer exist! Good Luck!

6. **Anupadaka Plane**. Even more abstract than the Atmic plane. Here everything bleeds into everything else. Extraordinarily abstract! Again, we might conceptualize the idea of everything being a part of everything else, but on this plane, that's the way it **is**! No dualisms either - all the contradictions are inside of each other! Mind Candy! Overload!!!! Again, good luck out here!

7. **Adi plane**. God is here. If Atmic and Anupadaka were weird, well, this is the weirdest of 'em all. Completely beyond anything we humans can say, do, feel, think, etc. Yet, Adi is the very essence of everything. Look for the billboards with all the great mystic's names on them!<g> I can say this though, the more buddhic energy you have in your aura, the better a feel you get for Adi.

So, that's a rough run down of the 7 major planes of our universe according to occult doctrine. Again, if you've not heard these ideas before, then it's quite a mindful to swallow all at once - and what's worse, I'm not done with the occult ideas yet! For those of you familiar with these ideas, forgive me if I've left out a detail or two from your favorite schemata. It was not my intention to be all encompassing here, but simply to provide enough background for later discussions. And I'd like to quickly say that I've included attempts at defining the Atmic, Anupadaka and Adi planes simply because I'm sick of seeing lists of the planes that state simply "we cannot understand these last 3 planes" or "beyond human comprehension". Sure, in terms of our direct experience, these statements about the 3 highest planes are true. However, as my

experience with occult matters has progressed, I have developed the above intuitions about the nature of these planes, and, you can take them for what they are worth to you.

So, according to occult ideas, there are these 7 planes. We can't see them, but they are there nonetheless. And, to repeat, occultists use these ideas to explain the nature of both death and dreams, as well as astral projection and all other psychic powers, including clairvoyance, psychometry and whatever other favorite psychic powers you want to add to the list.

So, we have defined the planes. Now let us define the vehicles or "bodies" we possess for interacting with the planes.

According to occult theory, we have 5 bodies. These are:

1. The Physical Body
2. The Etheric Body
3. The Astral Body
4. The Mental Body
5. The Buddhic Body

Now, when we define these bodies, we must define them from two perspectives at the same time. The first perspective is how these different bodies manifest in our normal waking life, and the second perspective is to define these bodies in terms of focusing your consciousness exclusively in that body and using it as a vehicle for perceiving its respective plane.

Also, it's important to say at the start that, in all reality, these five bodies are one body. These bodies operate simultaneously and are highly integrated. While we are awake here in the physical plane, we haven't the slightest clue that we have these five bodies because they each work so smoothly together that all we recognize is our unified perception and experience. In actuality, these 5 bodies represent the major FUNCTIONS we have as human beings. From the standpoint of our normal waking life, it is almost arbitrary to define the human being in terms of these 5 bodies. However, it is in their utility for explaining altered states of consciousness that the definitions of these bodies will be found to be very useful. Thus, once we get more into the specifics of astral projecting, we will see how useful this scheme of 5 bodies is.

And what we will see too is that defining human nature in terms of these 5 bodies will put us in an excellent position to understand very clearly our normal life here in the physical world. So, having said this, let's discuss each body in turn.

1. **The Physical Body**. This is the body that we know. This is the body with eyes and ears, hands and feet, internal organs, a brain and nervous system. This is our organic body made of molecules and electricity, pulsating with the living energies of the Earth and Sun.

The best way to think of your physical body is that it is like a TV set. As a TV set allows you to tune into specific channels, likewise your physical body allows you (i.e. your consciousness) to tune into the physical world. As a matter of fact, this is how you should think of all 5 bodies. Each body is a "tuner" that allows us to tune into the plane corresponding to that body. So, your physical body perceives the physical world of 3-D space and 1 dimensional time.

I said above that we need to view each body from two perspectives:

1. in terms of normal waking experience, and 2. in terms of altered states of consciousness. For the physical body, it is the only body we directly perceive while awake in the physical world. And when we are in an altered state of consciousness (such as dreams), we no longer perceive the physical body. There are exceptions to this last statement, but in general, it is true. Once we get into techniques for inducing astral projections, you will see that one way to "leave" your body entails losing consciousness of your physical body while at the same time gaining consciousness of your astral or Etheric body.

2. **The Etheric Body**. As was stated above, occultists consider the Etheric plane to be the invisible aspects of the physical plane. So then, it follows that our Etheric body is then the invisible parts of our physical body. To give you an idea of what our Etheric body may look like consider this. Hopefully you have seen how grains of iron will line up around a magnet, aligning with the magnetic field lines. Well, both our hearts and our brains are very electrical organs that are constantly emitting electrical fields. These fields emitted by the heart and brain are invisible to our senses, but are easily measured by machines (which is what the EKGs and EEGs used by doctors are). If you could literally perceive these electrical fields that come from your brain and heart, you would be seeing part of your Etheric body.

Also, there is electricity constantly pulsing along the nerves throughout our entire body. Again, we cannot directly perceive these flowing nerve energies, but they are there nonetheless. And again, these nerve energies are a part of our Etheric body. As a matter of fact, though some may debate this, the acupuncture charts of Tantra traditions are charts of the flowing of energies through the Etheric body.

Some occult teachings describe the Etheric body as being made of a blue glowing substance.

Now, from our the point of view of our waking experience, the Etheric body is the basis of all sensation and perception. When you feel something with your hand, smell something, see something or whatever, these sensations are registering in your Etheric body. This is why you do not perceive things happening in the physical plane when you are asleep or unconscious. See, it is a mistake to think that your physical/organic body perceives things. Your organic body is like a lens that **focuses** sensations. These focused sensations then register in your Etheric body, which means they are brought into your awareness. The physical/organic body is a machine that **conveys** sensation. The Etheric body is the body that **registers and interprets** sensation.

Those of you who are expert enough in physiology to argue with me about these ideas can feel free to do so.

Now, from the point of view of altered states of consciousness, it is possible to move about in the Etheric body independently from your physical/organic body. This is very difficult to do though. You can always tell that you are in your Etheric body because you feel very heavy and it is very hard to move. Also, it is likely that if you are in your Etheric body, then you will be in a dark, and sometimes, scary subplane. (More on this point below). Robert Monroe describes moving in his Etheric body, but does not call it such.

Also, it is likely that you have experienced having your consciousness focused in your Etheric body, but did not know it. This usually happens right when you are waking up or falling

asleep. Have you ever had the experience of waking up in bed and trying to move, or trying to talk but not being able to do so? If so, you might have even felt scared. If this has ever happened to you, what is actually going on here is that you are actually **not** awake. Instead, you have "woken up" on the Etheric plane in your Etheric body by accident. For those of you that have had such experiences, be happy, because these were actually Etheric projections! We will learn below how to cultivate the ability to do this, and also what to do when you find yourself in this position.

3. **The Astral Body**. From the point of view of being awake here in the physical world, your astral body is the emotions and desires you feel.

You know how sometimes you get real distinct "vibes" from people? Maybe someone makes you feel creepy, or another person uplifts you and makes you feel good, and yet other people seem to drain you of your energy?

Well, these "vibes" are in actuality you sensing that person's astral body. When you get angry, or sad, happy or feel any emotion, you are feeling your own astral body. When you sense these emotions in another person (which is called "empathy") you are feeling that person's astral body.

Now, again, some people will argue with this, saying that emotions are a part of the brain, contained in the nerves of the limbic system. However, I again will say that these brain regions that relate to emotion are gateways between the physical body and the astral body. Feeling emotion is not dependent upon having a physical/organic body. After you die you will continue to feel emotions because emotions originate in your astral body.

Now, in terms of altered states of consciousness, when we start getting into the meat of astral projection, the vast majority of your OOBes will occur in your astral body. This is the body you use at night when you are dreaming and your physical body is asleep. Thus, the world you will be in when you astral project will be extremely similar to the world you are in when you dream at night. We will have much more to say about the astral body and its properties as we proceed.

4. **The Mental Body**. During normal waking life, you perceive your mental body as your mind. You think thoughts, see images in your imagination (your "mind's eye"), can hear songs and voices "in your head". All of these phenomena are occurring in your mental body. Again, you can argue and say that all of these things occur in your brain, and that, if you did not have a brain, then you would not think thoughts, see things in your "mind's eye" or hear things in your head. And again, I will counter and say that the brain is a CHANNEL, a "machine" that allows these mental events to manifest on the physical plane. If you have no brain, you cannot express your mental behavior on the physical plane. However, having no physical brain does not prevent you from expressing your thoughts and ideas on the astral and mental planes.

And to repeat again, once you learn to project for yourself, you can decide who is right in these kinds of debates. Below we will discuss these types of debates a little more, but for now, all I'm trying to do is convey occult ideas about human anatomy.

From the point of view of altered states of consciousness, shifting the focus of your consciousness to your mental body will allow you to directly perceive the mental plane. I've already stated that this is very difficult, and that I have never done it. In the bibliography I

reference books by people who describe what the mental plane looks like. It is supposedly extremely beautiful, but I suppose this depends on what level of the mental plane you perceive.

5. **The Buddhic Body**. We've discussed the buddhic body already in the statements I made about morals and astral projecting. To repeat here: In our normal waking life, buddhic energy manifests as: creativity, novelty, spontaneity, wisdom, compassion, will power, sudden insight, great genius, great leadership abilities, deep spirituality. Other times, buddhic energy may manifest as death, disease and decay (this is the Hindu image of Shiva the Destroyer). Whatever your situation demands for growth, this is what the buddhic energy will manifest as. Ideas such as "God", "Tao", etc. refer to buddhic energy. However, religion is not buddhic energy, though it may be a channel for it. One very powerful source of buddhic energy is the Grateful Dead. Buddhic energy is the underlying essence of LIFE. It is everywhere and permeates everything we know. As far as being human goes, there is nothing more powerful than buddhic energy. We can think of buddhic energy however we please. It does not matter what we call it or what we think of it. Buddhic energy is the energy that moves our very minds. Mystics speak of the ineffable essence that underlies and unifies all reality. This ineffable essence is buddhic plane energy.

In terms of altered states of consciousness, it is extremely unlikely that anyone reading this will learn to focus their consciousness onto the buddhic plane. It is simply too subtle to do so. It IS possible to take LSD and feel the buddhic energy while you are awake here in the physical world. However, though this is not as difficult as focusing directly onto the buddhic plane, it takes great mastery over the LSD experience to be able to use it to perceive the buddhic energy that fills every nook and cranny of all life.

Now, ironically, though it seems the buddhic energy is the hardest to attain, it turns out to be the energy you should most desire to attain. Frankly, astral projecting is nothing compared to attaining buddhi, or learning how to have buddhic energies play through your being. Earlier I mentioned that there were Eastern and Western views of occultism, and till now have made no attempt to distinguish between them. However, when it comes to opening yourself up to buddhic energy, Eastern occultism has always been crystal clear about this, whereas Western occultism is not always so clear. Eastern occultism is yoga, and the purpose of yoga is to become enlightened. Becoming enlightened is exactly the same as opening up to the buddhic energies. This process goes under many names: enlightenment, samasamadi, mysticism, cosmic consciousness, satori. All these words refer to the same thing.

However, it is not my purpose in these notes to digress on mysticism.

For the interested reader, see the reference by van der Leeuw in the bibliography.

To conclude this brief overview of occult anatomy, I would like to define the word "aura", which I used above and will have occasion to use throughout these notes. The word "aura" is a generic term and can refer to any one of the nonphysical bodies by itself or in combination with the other nonphysical bodies. I use the term to refer to all the nonphysical bodies at once. Some people use the term to refer specifically to the astral body. "Aura" is a vague term. I prefer, when speaking, to call a specific body by its proper name. And again, if I want to refer to the four nonphysical bodies (i.e. Etheric, astral, mental and buddhic) simultaneously, I will use the word "aura".

So, we have gone over occult physics and occult anatomy. All of this to give some idea of the occult interpretation of the astral projection/OOBE experience! What I have done above it to lay out in a barebones outline the elements of the occult **worldview**. And a barebones outline it is. Again, readers that want more detail should consult the bibliography. What I have covered above, though, is sufficient for our purposes here.

To summarize, occultists teach that there are 7 planes and that we have bodies for perceiving 4 of these planes. By this view, altered states of consciousness are explained by the fact that we shift our conscious awareness from the physical plane/body to one of our other, nonphysical bodies and perceive events occurring on the respective plane. This is indeed one of the valid theoretical approaches to explaining astral projection. And, as I've already said, we will find this is the most useful view to take. Below I will go into other theories of what astral projection is, but, when we start attempting to be practical and put the various theories to the test of practice, we will find ourselves returning to the occult theory again and again to explain what happens to us when we are "out of body".

2. Scientific Views

Other ideas exist about astral projection besides the occult ideas expressed above. I classify these other views under the heading "scientific" because these views mainly stem from the attempts of scientists of various persuasions to understand the OOBE experience. The persuasions of scientists of interest here are psychologists and parapsychologists. These are the folks, other than occultists, who have given us ideas about the astral projection experience. What I will do is explain some of these nonoccult ideas, then afterward make some attempt to compare the occult and nonoccult views of the projection experience. After that I will then try to tie everything together and provide the theoretical framework we will use throughout the rest of these notes.

a) Parapsychology - OOBEs

At beginning I said I would use the terms "astral projection" and "OOBE" (which stands for "out-of-body experience") interchangeably. Hopefully, you now understand what the term "astral projection" means and where it comes from. Now we are going to look at the term "OOBE". The term "OOBE" is a word coined by parapsychologists. Parapsychology, as a science, began with the work of a man named J.B. Rhine who did statistical experiments on psychic powers at Duke University in the 1930s. Rhine's application of statistics to psychic phenomena gave rise to the tradition of parapsychology, a "science" which has had a questionable and spotted reputation from its inception. Generally speaking, parapsychologists have been interested in displaying the existence of so-called psychic abilities, or "psi" as they term it, using statistics and other props such as dice, or the relatively famous ESP cards that you may have seen.

What can be said about parapsychology? Not very much actually. Frankly, other fields of science don't take parapsychologists very seriously. And because parapsychologists have been so preoccupied with proving that psychic powers exist by statistical tests, they have done little to offer real

explanations of psychic phenomena. We saw above that occultists explain psychic powers with the theory of the planes and nonphysical bodies, and that psychic powers are the result of shifting the focus of our consciousness from the physical plane to one of the other planes. Basically, parapsychologists have not been able to provide a competing explanation of psychic powers.

And what's even worse, parapsychologists, on the whole, have completely ignored the ideas of occultists. What parapsychologists have done over the 60 or so years that they've been around is to coin a bunch of new words like "psi", "ESP", "OOBE", "remote viewing" and many other jargons, without having any really clear meaning of these words. The result of this is that parapsychologists have created more confusion than clarity. Many of the terms they have coined (such as "ESP" or "OOBE") are now common in our language, yet these terms have no precise meaning. Earlier, I said that theory without practice is just empty talk. Unfortunately, this is what parapsychology is: a lot of talk and very little action.

For example, the term OOBE was coined in the 1960s. Apparently, the older term "astral projection", and its occult implications, was to be ignored. What does the term OOBE mean? Well, "out of body experience" seems to mean that you leave your body. But the questions immediately come up: **What** leaves? and **Where** does it go? I guess it's nice, at least, that parapsychologists recognize that the OOBE phenomena exists. Unfortunately, the work by parapsychologists on the OOBE have produced results that parapsychologists did not expect.

The type of experiments parapsychologists have done on OOBEs are things such as putting a person in a room to project, and in an adjacent, locked room, putting a piece of paper with something written on it, and then expecting the projector to "leave his body", go into the locked room, and read what's on the paper. These types of experiments have produced very mixed results which are by no means easy to interpret. Mostly they have been unsuccessful because the person projecting could not project, or, if the person did project, then they did not accurately read the message in the locked room, or never even made it into the locked room!

What are we to make of the results of these parapsychology experiments?

Well, first, let's look under the hood, so to speak, at the implications inherent in the designs of these parapsychology experiments. Unlike occultists, who very clearly state their premises, parapsychologists never clearly lay out their intentions. Thus we are forced to second guess them to some extent. So, let's do this.

So, we asked: what leaves the body and where does it go? Well, the experimental design above does not directly address the question of **what** leaves the body. Yet, the fact that the parapsychologist expects the projector to bring back information implies that at least the parapsychologist knows that it is the person's awareness that is "leaving the body".

Of much more importance though is the question: **where** does this disembodied awareness go? Well, the answer to this question is very obvious from the experimental design above. The parapsychologist obviously expects the projecting person to go into the adjacent room. What this means is that the parapsychologist assumes that **whatever is leaving the body stays in the physical world**. This is a key point for understanding the meaning of the term OOBE. That is to say, the term "OOBE",

as used by parapsychologists, implies that there is only a physical world, and that there are not any planes as occultists describe. Obviously, when I use the term OOB in these notes, I do not mean this.

Now, the lack of success that parapsychologists have encountered in the type of experiments described above has forced some parapsychologists to rethink their ideas. In the past few years, certain parapsychologists have begun to recognize the possibility that the OOB subject does NOT project into the physical world, and that there must be some nonphysical world in which the OOB occurs. In particular, these ideas have been stated by both D. Scott Rogo and Lawrence LeShan, who are both noted parapsychologists. However, only D. Scott Rogo has gone so far as to suggest that occult ideas might be the correct explanation of the OOB experience. Rogo himself learned how to have OOBs, and came to this conclusion based on his own first hand experience. Again, if all goes well, then you too can be like Rogo and go and see for yourself. To read about Rogo's experiences, look for his book listed in the bibliography. Rogo's book, which is called "Leaving The Body", is actually an important reference and all of you are highly encouraged to read this book.

However, Rogo's view is not widely held by the few parapsychologists who are around today, and generally speaking, parapsychologists still cling to the notion that psychic powers (or "psi" as they call it), including OOBs, are purely physical phenomena.

So, this is what the term OOB really means: it implies a purely physical view of the projection experience. As I said, I don't use the term OOB in this fashion, but parapsychologists do.

This is all I will say about the parapsychological view at this point. We will return to it below when we compare occult and non occult views later in the discussion.

b) Psychology - Lucid Dreaming

The next non occult view we shall discuss is the view that comes to us from the science of psychology. Now, anyone familiar with academic psychology knows that there are many schools of thought in psychology including: Freudian views, the views of Carl Jung, the psychology of Abraham Maslow, behaviorist psychology, cognitive psychology, psychiatry, physiological psychology and neurology - just to name a few! I do not plan on discussing all of these different schools of thought here. If the reader has enough interest in these topics, you can go read up on them for yourself. What I want to do here is outline the broad features of the ideas in psychology relevant to the astral projection experience, and outline these in enough detail so that 1. you at least know that such ideas exist, and 2. you are able to compare these ideas to the occult and parapsychological ideas of the projection experience.

In general, psychologists are not stupid. They have observed many altered states of consciousness and come up with a number of theories to account for these altered states of consciousness. Psychologists recognize astral projection under a variety of names: lucid dreams, dissociative experiences, near death experiences, hypnagogia (of which we will have much to say about later). From what I've seen in the psychological literature, no one has really tied all these experiences together under one unified theory. Each of these phenomena is thought of in different terms. Even the fact of dreaming has not been clearly tied into the fact of astral projection by any psychologists as far as I know.

Now, in the last few years, there have been a number of books published by psychologists involving lucid dreams (one such book is called "Have a Lucid Dream in 30 Days" - but I do not remember the author). These books are "how to do it" books for having lucid dreams, and are quite effective as it goes. However, where they lack is in having a good understanding of what the lucid dream experience is. One such book that I read said something to the effect "No one knows what a lucid dreams is..." and I thought to myself, **YOU** don't know what a lucid dream is!".

So, for those of you that read these types of books, what I'm saying here is that these books may show you how to actually have a lucid dream, but the theory they teach you about the nature of lucid dreaming is not very good, and, as I've already stated, the theory is important for helping you understand what is happening to you once you start projecting. The more powerful the theory, the more effective will be your projection experiences. The flimsy theories of psychologists will aid you only so far, and there are many things you will experience when you project that these theories cannot explain.

Lucid dreams ARE astral projections. When we get into techniques below, we will use this idea in one of our techniques. The idea of a lucid dream is that it is a dream in which you are aware that you are dreaming. As I said earlier, occultists teach that the place where we go dream is the astral plane. However, this idea is not accepted in modern psychology. The psychologists have a much "softer" view of the projection experience, calling it a lucid dream. Interestingly, psychologists have no explanation of what dreams are! Some work under the idea that dreams are a vivid hallucination created in your brain while you sleep. Others have more nebulous ideas about collective unconsciousness and similar stuff. Freudians look upon dreams as a symbolic realm where repressions are stored up. To some extent each of these views is correct - correct that is, but highly incomplete. Taken together, the ideas in psychology about dreams and lucid dreams, at best, paint a somewhat confusing mosaic of sometimes conflicting ideas about the nature of dream and lucid dream experiences. At their worst, the ideas in psychology about dreams and lucid dreaming can lead you into an intellectual maze of jargon and speculation that will only confuse you and not help you one iota in your quest to actually project! If this happens, you are wasting your time and energy.

So basically, we have seen that "astral projection" is an occult term. "OOBE" is a term from parapsychology. The term "lucid dreaming" is a term from psychology. A lucid dream is a dream in which you are aware that you are dreaming. However, psychologists offer no really convincing and complete idea of how dreams work or exactly what their nature is.

And again, I am fully open to debate the ideas I present here. If any of you do not like what I have to say, or if you think I am wrong in the ideas I am presenting, please feel free to challenge me on any point you wish.

D. Tying It All Together

So, we have discussed the three main terms used to describe the experience I hope to teach you, and the origins of these terms. What is important to realize is that EACH OF THESE TERMS STEMS FROM A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE WORLD. Many beginners in astral

projection ask "what is the difference between an astral projection and an OOB?" or "what is the difference between an OOB and a lucid dream?" Well, the answer to this is that each of these words stems from a group of people with different views about Nature and Humankind. **That** is the difference between these words. In terms of the phenomena to which they refer, they all refer to the exact same thing. Each of these words represents a DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION of this phenomena, which is the experience of projecting. Debating about the meaning of these 3 terms is useless unless the debating is based on experience. What is important is learning HOW TO PROJECT, and that is what we shall focus on here. However, all of this introductory material is provided so that you students have some understanding of the different interpretations that exist. You are, of course, completely free to pick the interpretation you like best. However, I think it is more important to be open minded than to be of strong opinions.

We are now going to compare these three terms. To summarize:

Term	Associated World View
Astral Projection	Occultism
Out-of-body Experience	Parapsychology
Lucid Dream	Psychology

What we want to do at this point is come up with some way to understand how these three views of the astral projection experience are related to each other. First off, as I said, it is my opinion, based on my experiences with altered states of consciousness, that these three terms refer to the exact same phenomena. Lucid dreams, OOBs, and astral projections are all identical experiences. Again, it is my opinion that to attempt to define these three terms as referring to 3 different phenomena is like splitting hairs - in other words, a waste of time.

Perhaps the most important distinction one can make amongst the **viewpoints** represented by these three terms is the following. Basically, the difference in these 3 terms gets down to different ways to view the nature of our consciousness and our definitions of what it is to be a human being. And, after having thought about this for a long time, it is now clear to me that there are essentially two, mutually exclusive ways to view the nature of human consciousness. These two views can be stated thus:

1. Human consciousness is solely and completely a product of the brain.

Which is to say, our existence is purely physical. All of the underlying causes of our consciousness are grounded in the laws of chemistry, physics and biology. In other words, physical causes underlie human consciousness, period. For simplicity's sake, we will call this the "materialistic view" of human consciousness.

2. Human consciousness is NOT physical. Human consciousness, in its fundamental essence is NONPHYSICAL. Our physical body is not the cause of our consciousness, but is instead a vehicle by which to express our consciousness in the physical world. This view we will call the "occult view", because it is the view that occultists teach. It does not matter what particular

brand of occultism we subscribe to. All branches of occult thought share this underlying axiom, as do most religious teachings.

So, this is the vital dichotomy we are faced with: either our physical organic body is the cause of our consciousness, or our physical-organic body is a vehicle for allowing our consciousness to access the physical world.

That's it. It boils down to these two simple alternatives.

Now, with regard to the 3 terms listed above, and their corresponding world views, we can say that, in general, parapsychologists and psychologists share the materialistic view and that occultists possess the occult view of the nature of human consciousness.

Now, these generalizations must be qualified by the following statements. First, all psychologists and parapsychologists may not be materialists as I have defined this term above. Each person, of course, will have their individual beliefs that may or may not see human consciousness in some framework other than in purely physical terms. I am not trying to say that all people who are psychologists and parapsychologists believe that consciousness is purely physical. What I am saying however is the traditions of both psychology and parapsychology - in their official (or pseudo-official in the case of parapsychology) stances as academic institutions of learning and science, have traditionally

NOT accepted the occult ideas that consciousness is nonphysical. And further, both psychology and parapsychology have at times been blatant materialists (as is behaviorist psychology or the typical statistical parapsychology).

And most importantly, the idea that the physical body CAUSES consciousness is indeed the official platform of higher learning in our Universities today. This is the basis by which modern medical science operates, it is the basis of all academic forms of science from anthropology to sociology to physics to evolutionary biology. Nothing could be more foreign in the context of modern university learning than the occult ideas of human consciousness.

So, that's it. Two different views of consciousness, three different terms to describe the experience of projecting. All that I've said above, taken together, forms the basic outline of the theory behind astral projection. My main intention here is simply to expose you to these ideas. I do not really care to debate about the relative merit of these ideas any further than in terms of their utility at helping us astral project. There are a lot of open questions that surround astral projecting. Anyone that tries to sell you on one particular interpretation of the astral projection experience is pulling your leg. None of the three terms above does any more than capture facets of the experience. If you are so inclined, feel free to pick your favorite views and go with them. Personally, it is my opinion that the best you can do is be aware of the variety of viewpoints that exist (whether it's about astral projecting or anything else), and eclectically draw upon these different views as circumstances demand. Being open to things is much more important than anything else, especially in this business of altered states of consciousness.

E. Radio Station Theory of Consciousness - The Subplanes

Well, we're almost done with the theory stuff! What I'm going to do now is to present the theory I personally use to explain my own projections. In doing so, we will also start to make the transition between me talking about other people's ideas and me talking about my actual experiences. The "radio station theory of consciousness" has come from my need to have a unified way to think about all the things that have happened to me in my projections. Basically, this "radio station view of consciousness" is a take-off on the occult ideas I outlined above.

It posits that there are nonphysical places we can take our consciousness; in other words, planes. The reason I believe this is because, in a number of my projections, I have been in places that **looked like** places I know on the physical plane (my own bedroom and house mostly). However, when I explore these environments in my projections, and then wake-up back here on the physical plane and go and study the exact same place, I always observe numerous differences. So, my conclusion is that, where ever I'm at during my projection, it is definitely NOT the physical world I am in when I am awake.

Another thing I have consistently experienced in my projections is the fact that sometimes when I project I am **somewhere** but other times I am **nowhere**. In the journal I keep of my experiences, I call the "somewhere" "episodes", and I call the "nowhere" I go the "void".

When I am in an episode I can be anywhere - for there are a lot of places to be in the planes! It may be a sunny meadow, a strange abstract colored landscape, a dark scary place full of zombies, a mall, house, suburb (yes, all these things exist on the astral plane!). Any time I am anywhere in a projection, I call it an "episode".

The void is altogether different. Imagine being in a completely dark, completely silent place with nothing in it. This is what the void is. I go to the void almost as frequently as I'm in an episode during my projections. Often, as soon as I "leave" my body, I am in the void. Or, I may be in an episode and I will "fade-out" and disappear from wherever I am at, and I will appear in the void. As well, I've discovered ways to get out of the void into an episode, and I will share these techniques with you below, just in case you find yourself in the void. Now, there is nothing wrong with being in the void. It is actually very peaceful there - extremely quiet. However, chances are you will be like me and be much more interested in exploring the things going on the planes, in which case you'd rather be somewhere than nowhere!

About episodes: Like I said, I can be anywhere - and I've seen some strange stuff! For example, once I stood on a cloud and played guitar with a friendly spirit. Another time, a talking rhino gave me a ride through a forest. On another occasion I kissed a beautiful girl in a lovely soft world of pastel reds and yellows. Once I saw a ghost with a Jack-O-Lantern head in an underground passage. Once I was in a strange house, and the floor of the kitchen was made of little, rainbow colored squirming human bodies! Another time, I saw an abstractly colored field of dancing shifting colors. On many occasions, I've found myself in these absolutely creepy places populated by rotting bodies and other grotesque creatures. Sometimes I am in places I recognize, like my house or my neighborhood, or my old college. Other times I'm in places I've never seen before. Buildings are very strange on the planes - they seem to go on forever! One hall leads to another leads to another leads to another seemingly forever. I will go into some of my experiences

in much more detail below. Right now all I'm trying to do is give you an idea of the incredibly rich variety of places to explore and discover in the planes.

There is an occult idea I want to mention at this point that I did not mention above and that is the idea that each plane is subdivided into subplanes. In Theosophy, it is taught that each plane consists of 7 subplanes. Just like there are different grades or types of matter on the physical plane - solids, liquids, gases, fire, heat and light - well, occultists teach that the planes have similar gradations of the matter of which each plane is composed, and these gradations in the matter of any plane are called subplanes. That is one way to look at the idea at least. And there is merit to this idea too. Imagine the spectrum colors of a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet (which you can easily remember by the acronym ROY G BIV). Red is the lowest of the spectrum and violet is the highest. You can use the idea of a rainbow's colors as a rough MAP of the subplanes. For each plane there are lower subplanes (I will also use the word "region" to mean subplane at times) that bleed into intermediate subplanes that bleed into higher subplanes. So, lower subplanes of a plane are like red in the rainbow, intermediate subplanes like green, and higher subplanes like violet, and of course, with all the intervening shades between these.

In terms of the astral plane, the "rainbow" of subplanes forms a spectrum of emotion. At the "red" end of the spectrum are the lowest and worst of human emotions: hate, anger, greed, lust, envy. Up at the higher end of the spectrum (the violet end) are the best of human emotions: kindness, happiness, warmth, caring and so on. And again, there is every combination possible between these two ends of the spectrum.

Why is this idea important? Like I said, it helps provide a map that will give you some idea of where you are at during a projection. This is because, no matter where you find yourself, there will always be a "vibe" present, some distinct feeling you get from the place where you are at. Some places may scare you, others may make you feel very light and happy, others may make you horny, and some may feel quite normal to you (in terms of whatever "normal" is to you). These vibes that you get, these feelings, give you an indication of what subplane you are on.

Having the ability to "map" out where you are at during a projection is actually a practical thing, and this is not simply just an intellectual exercise. For example, there would be times that I would project and appear in a place that gave me a bad vibe. I would then realize I was on a lower subplane and then leave it. Of course, if you want, you can stay and explore the lower subplanes, which is a useful exercise.

How do you leave a lower subplane? More on this in a later lesson!

So, that is one useful view of the subplanes. There is a second view of the subplanes we need to discuss too. This is the view presented by Robert Monroe who is a very excellent projector. His three books are listed in the bibliography, and Monroe is essential reading for any student of astral projection. Monroe speaks of the "rings" and by this he means basically a subplane. But the connotations are not the same as the theosophical idea. Monroe, in his second book "Far Journeys" actually has a map of the rings and what you can expect to find on the different levels. THE RINGS CORRESPOND TO STATES OF MIND. And the correspondence is like that which I stated above with the rainbow metaphor. The scummiest states of mind are on the lowest rings. Average people, people not especially bad, but not

especially good, are on the rings a little farther out. Beyond these are rings that correspond to people who are strongly devoted to upholding ideals -be these religious, political or intellectual. And farther out are rings that correspond to states of mind of the highest nobility and intellect and spirituality. And beyond these rings are quiet rings where you won't find human states of mind.

It should be apparent that Monroe's rings sound an awful lot like the planes described by occultists. As a matter of fact, they are. Don't let the fact that Monroe uses different words fool you - he is describing basically the exact same thing that occultists have described. However, what is important is that Monroe's descriptions of the rings are **BASED ON HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES**. Monroe does not claim to be an occultist, so, he made up his own words to describe his experiences. This only makes sense.

Again, the point of this digression is that there is an order to where you will go and what you will experience in your OOBes. Whether you use the theosophical idea of the subplanes, or Monroe's idea of rings, the bottom line is the same: "lower" corresponds to that which we humans consider bad and "higher" corresponds to that which we humans consider good. And this spectrum from bad places to good places is the map, the organization you will encounter in the places you will find yourself during your projections.

You're probably wondering: so what does all this have to do with Don's "radio station theory of consciousness"? Well, basically, this "radio station theory of consciousness" is my description of the organization of the subplanes, or rings, based on my actual experiences projecting. The reason I use an analogy with a radio is because I experience episodes (which is being on a subplane or ring) and I also experience being in the void. The idea of my radio station metaphor is this: we all know that on the radio there are radio stations you can tune into up and down the dial. And what is in between these radio stations? Nothing is, and when you tune into a place on the dial where there is no radio station you get STATIC. The way I figure it, when I'm in an episode, this is just like tuning into a radio station, and when I'm in the void, this is just like tuning into the static between radio stations where nothing exists.

Note that we are adopting the occult viewpoint that explains altered states of consciousness as a shift of focus of ones consciousness away from the physical world and towards the planes. Shifting the focus of your consciousness into the nonphysical planes is the same as tuning into that plane. So, that's it, that's the model I use to describe my projection experiences. And I should add that this "radio dial" of consciousness does indeed follow the order described above for subplanes/rings. That is, there really does appear to be a gradation in these "radio stations" of consciousness from the most horrible and ugly to the most incredibly beautiful and noble.

Now, there is one last remark I have to make about this radio station idea that relates to my actual experiences when I project. Up above I made the comment of "fading out" of an episode and appearing in the void. What I am referring to here is actually a very important aspect of my projection experiences that I call the "lock-mold". To understand what I mean by lock-mold, again imagine a radio. Now, we have all had the experience that sometimes when we try to tune into a station on the radio we don't get very good reception and there is a lot of static mixed in with the broadcast of the station. We might fiddle with the dial to try to get a better reception of the radio station. Well, this is exactly what happens to me when I am in an episode. I am

extremely literal about this. When I am in an episode, I am actually TUNED INTO the subplane I am on to some degree from worse to good. I have characterized every single projection I have ever had in terms of how good my lockmold is. When my lockmold is good that means that I feel very stable and I am perceiving wherever I am at very well. When my lockmold is bad, which is analogous to getting a lot of static over the radio station, I feel very unstable and my perception of the subplane I am on is very poor. When I have a bad lockmold during a projection, usually what happens is that my vision, hearing and sense of touch on that subplane "blink" on and off. Usually, I lose the sense of sight first, touch second, and hearing is the last to go. In other words, when I have a bad lockmold my vision will blink on and off - I will literally be able to see for a moment and then lose it and be blind. I have, over the course of my experiences found a number of tricks to stabilize my lockmold, and these I will discuss ahead.

Now, I bring this idea of lockmold up because - and I really want to stress this - it has been a central feature of my projection experiences. Like I said, in every single projection I have had I am aware of how good or bad my lockmold is. I very strongly suspect that once you start projecting, you will also encounter this lockmold feeling, so I am telling you about lockmolds, and will tell you the things I've learned to control my lockmold, so you will then know what to do when you project and start to lose your lockmold.

Really, I am very serious about this. Again, your lockmold is a feeling you will have of how well you are tuned into wherever you happen to be in your projection. Let me go off on some of my personal experiences a bit just to drive this idea of lockmold home to you. Below are listed some excerpts from my personal astral projection journal which highlight this lockmold phenomena:

1>

"...The doorway led into a castle and I was very surprised by this. I remember thinking to myself that rooms have all these hidden directions in them in the astral plane. It was a huge and elegantly decorated place and the decor looked fairly modern. I wandered about and eventually came to a room that had a window that was overlooking a long shingled roof. I climbed through the window and there was a girl outside on the roof. It was sunny outside and I felt very good. Me and the girl talked, but I do not remember what we talked about. I could see around me outside, what looked like a fairly typical, though completely unfamiliar, neighborhood and I was curious to explore it. I went to fly off the roof but my lockmold began to weaken and I blacked out...."

2>

"...Somehow, I was back in my bedroom, half conscious of the physical [my eyes were closed but I could hear sounds outside]. I could then see my room as if I was awake (even though my eyes were closed) and there was this thing floating in front of me. I stared at it and it seemed to be staring at me. It very much reminded me of an insect, but it was a foot and a half high. It had a spherical base with what looked like thin legs protruding out in all directions. From the base rose a long slender neck, and at the top of the neck was a head. The face on the head reminded me of a praying mantis, or a nun in a habit. It was very curious how it seemed to be studying me. At first I

didn't know what to think; was it some astral demon? Some kind of astral plane creature? Then I felt myself losing grip of the lockmold, and the scene of my room and the floating creature faded out slowly. I laid there feeling my body on the bed thinking "damn, too much physical." Could hear noises outside, etc. "

Note: Number 3 here is a very good example:

3>

"...Was back on my bed, conscious, and I wanted to project again. Went up and out of my body, flew through the ceiling, and then through another ceiling, but was back in my body. Jumped out again, and was standing in my room, but my lockmold was very shaky. There seemed to be another window in my room, one that didn't exist on the physical plane. I jumped through this window and seemed to be in a restaurant. At least that is what it sounded like. My lockmold was very shaky and I could not see at all, I could only hear. My vision blinked on long enough for me to see that there was another window in front of me, and I could sense that outside this window was immense, as if the room I was presently in was way up in the sky, and if I were to look out the window, I would only see the vastness of the sky all around me. I thought that I was where dead people are, and for some reason, the association was made between "heaven" and the "sky". My vision was gone again, but I jumped out the window anyway. I got the impression, from the sounds around me, that I was in an outdoor mall or bazaar. I heard all kinds of things going on, people selling stuff, conversations, etc.. I thought, "I'm in a mall in the sky". This whole time I had been clinging to the window ledge being afraid of the height. For a moment my vision locked on and I saw stalls with goods floating everywhere and no ground at all around me. I remembered that I could fly, so I let go of the ledge and jumped forward. I fell down about 30 feet and just floated there. My vision was gone again, but I heard people who seemed to be able to see me, and they were laughing at me as if I was behaving in an unusual way. I stumbled to pull myself back to the wall I had just jumped from. I found the ledge and sat there blind, but I distinctly heard a radio playing and I listened to a commercial on the radio. Then I lost my lockmold and was back in my body...."

So, these above three examples give you some idea of what a lockmold is. You will see this idea of the lockmold feeling expressed in every personal account of my projections I describe for you. So, by no means have you heard the last about lockmolds!

At this point however, that about wraps up my presentation of this radio station theory of consciousness I use to think of my own projections. To summarize, the important points about this idea are:

1. Like tuning into a radio station, the subplanes are "stations" that you can tune into with your consciousness.
2. The void is like the static that exists between radio stations, and when you tune into the void, you perceive nothing at all outside of you.
3. Your lockmold is the feeling you get of how well you are tuned into wherever you are at in your projection.

F. Mystical View of Consciousness

Finally, I want to end the introductory theory section of these notes with what I believe are ideas to tie all the stuff I said above together.

As you see, we can take any number of views of the projection experience. You can debate the relative merit of any of these views till you are blue in the face. It should be apparent that I discourage such semantic arguing, but at the same time I strongly advocate that you be as familiar with as many viewpoints as you can, again, not only about astral projecting, but about everything in life.

Now, I've already stated that, even though astral projecting is an extremely dramatic experience within the context of our society's accepted ideas about reality, compared to learning how to be in touch with the buddhic plane, astral projection is nothing. In other words, astral projecting is not the end all be all of life. Bringing buddhic plane energies into your life **IS** the end all be all of life.

There is another member of the New Age forum who is an excellent astral projector, and that is Jeff Wiley, the section leader of section 13 (DREAMS) and Jeff has a philosophy that he and I both share, which kind of sets a bottom line to what all this astral projection stuff means. Most people make the distinction that, in some sense, their physical life is real, but their dream life is not real. Learning to astral project blows this idea right out the door. But even more importantly, once you start to project, you realize that, in some sense, your dream/projection life is equal to your waking physical life. Then, a new insight kind of hits you. And that is, all of our conscious experience is more like dreaming than not. Our physical life is actually a strange kind of dream, that, like all dreams, is destined to end one day. What becomes apparent when you've expanded the horizons of your personal experience enough is that **THERE IS JUST CONSCIOUSNESS**. It really doesn't matter what form the consciousness takes, or what plane the consciousness manifests on. Such things are merely relative. The absolute in life is **CONSCIOUSNESS**: mine, yours, a tree's, a dog's, a planet's, a god's - all just consciousness.

It kind of comes down to the old cliché "life's a dream". What you are really looking for here is experiences that can catalyze in you a transformation - a transformation of attitudes, of your outlook, of your perceptions of yourself and life; a transformation that will bring you to the conscious knowledge of your place in the scheme of things. I call this "opening up to the buddhic plane", Jeff calls this "realizing the Big Dream". In either case it's the same thing. And it is definitely where you should set your sights.

II. HOW TO ASTRAL PROJECT

A. Using Dreams As A Springboard For Astral Projection

Well, we've gone through the theory, now it's time to get to the practice. The \$10,000 question is: how do you astral project? There are two main methods I will discuss: 1. becoming lucid in a dream, and 2. by putting yourself into a trance. We will discuss each of these methods in some detail because these are the methods I have used successfully time and time again. There is also a third method you will find which I will mention, though I do not use this method. This third method involves visualization exercises. We will discuss dream methods first, trance methods second, and then end this section with a discussion of visualization methods. Also, I will mention briefly tapes and other devices that people use to achieve OOBES.

Before getting to specific methods, I want to lay out one important thing that you should do:

-----> **KEEP A JOURNAL!** <-----

This is **very** important. You want to keep some kind of concrete record of all of your experiences with altered states of consciousness. Why? Because it is very easy to forget the details of these experiences. You may think you will remember something, but, just as is the case with our normal dreams, you will forget as time goes on. If you have a record of your experiences you can always refer back to it at any time. I'm not kidding either; it's very easy to forget the details of specific projections. Even now I will recount an old projection to someone, then go look the actual entry up in my journal and realize I have forgotten important parts of the projection or have confused two different projections.

Another reason for keeping records of your experiences is that, as these records accumulate over time, you can go back periodically and read through them. What you may then discover are similarities and regularities in your experiences that you may not have found otherwise. For example, after I had been projecting for a few months I read over my journal and discovered a recurring pattern in my projections. What I discovered is that, often, I would attempt to fly in my projection but, once I would start to ascend, my way would be blocked by tree branches. Now, this didn't happen all the time, only once in a while. It occurred infrequently enough that I didn't realize that it was a pattern. It was only by looking at my accumulated records over a period of about 6 months that I realized this was occurring often enough that it might mean something. And mean something it did. I have since come to realize that these tree branches blocking me from flying away were a message from my subconscious mind. Every time this occurred in my projections - the trees preventing me from flying - it was a symbol of a serious defect in my personality. It took me some time to figure this symbolism out, but once I did I started working on this problem. And over time, as I've overcome this problem in my personality, I have not been plagued by the occurrence of trees blocking me from flying in my projections.

So, not only is the above an example of why you should keep good records, but it's also an example of what I said earlier about how your personality appears to be **outside** of you during a projection and how projections are a form of self-therapy.

Back to note keeping: In my case, for a long time I simply kept a notebook close to my bed. Every time I had a projection the very first thing I would do when I returned here to the physical plane is write down as much as I could remember of my projection. The entries I've made have been as long as 10 pages (in the case where I remembered the projection well), or may have only been a quick outline of notes that I later (usually the same day) went back and filled in. Sometimes, I have gone one or two days before recording the experience, but I don't recommend this. I've also made notes on whatever scrap paper was available to me. Eventually, I've transferred all my notes to the computer. Now I keep my astral projection journal through my word processor. But still, I often write it down on paper before typing it into the computer. The bottom line is to do whatever is convenient for you, but definitely keep records of your experiences!

Keeping a journal takes discipline. Astral projecting, just like any other skill, requires discipline, and keeping good notes is a part of the discipline you need to be successful.

Another thing I want to say at the beginning of this section on methods is that astral projection is a **SKILL**. As such it is like any other skill that humans have; some people pick it up easily, others do not. I like to draw the analogy between learning to astral project and learning to play a musical instrument. Some people are born with the talent to play a musical instrument. Very few people are born musical geniuses. For most of us, however, the only way to learn a musical instrument is by **practice**. And for those of us who have to practice, our learning may come easily or it may only come with much work and dedication. Well, learning to astral project is the exact same thing. Very few people are born with the talent to astral project. For some, the learning process comes easily. For most of us, learning to astral project requires work and effort. **THERE IS NOTHING MAGICAL ABOUT LEARNING TO ASTRAL PROJECT.** Like anything else, you need to learn the right theory, the right techniques and **PRACTICE** them. And like anything else in life, you get out of it what you put into it. The more you practice, the more you attempt to learn, the better you will be.

And, unlike other skills we learn here in the physical world, such as the example I gave for learning to play a musical instrument, the factors that underlie your ability to project are primarily **psychological**. Factors such as intelligence, personality, emotional make-up, social upbringing, and your belief system are all going to be determinants in how hard or how easy it is for you to project. So, for example, you don't really have to change your beliefs to learn to play an instrument or to learn to play baseball. However, when you learn to astral project, your beliefs are critical. If you hold certain beliefs it will be impossible for you to astral project (i.e. if you are a totally cynical materialist). Other beliefs could potentially lead you to harm when you learn to astral project (i.e. if you are a staunch Christian who believes in Hell - you just might find yourself in Hell during a projection and scare the **** out of yourself!). So, this is just another way to say what I said earlier; when you learn to astral project, you are embarking on a journey of **self-transformation** to some extent or another.

Now, there is no easy way to determine if you are a person to whom astral projection comes easily or if you are the kind of person who has to work hard at achieving a projection. At the very end of these notes I will discuss how you can use astrology to determine your propensity towards having an OOB. But these astrological methods of determining how likely you are to have a projection are only indicators. And furthermore, these astrological methods are limited by the accuracy of astrology, and in particular by the accuracy of the interpretation of your chart (reading charts isn't easy to start with, let alone using a chart to determine if you can astral project or not.) Even if your chart predicts that it would be easy for you to project, this is still no substitute for learning the right methods and for honest practice and work. So, until you can prove otherwise, it's best not to glamorize your potential skills at astral projection. It's best just to assume that, as an average person, you will have to put some work and effort into your attempts to astral project.

So, this said, let's get into the "how to" of astral projection.

I suppose it takes some of the mystique and excitement out of astral projecting when we realize that we very instinctively, and **unconsciously** astral project all the time. Except in this case we don't call the activity "astral projecting". What I am referring to, of course, is the very common process that we call "dreaming". As I said above, **DREAMS AND ASTRAL PROJECTIONS ARE VERY CLOSELY RELATED**. In a nutshell, dreams are UNCONSCIOUS (or you could say "instinctive") astral projections, and astral projections are CONSCIOUS dreams. Let us now explore this notion in detail.

Every one of us dreams every night. We may not remember our dreams the following morning, but this does not mean that we did not dream. You can take it for granted that you dream at night, whether you remember it or not.

When I discussed theory above, I said a couple of things about dreams. First I said that psychologists do not have a good explanation of what dreams are. It was also stated that occultists claim that the act of dreaming is a transfer of our consciousness from the physical plane to the astral plane. The bottom line is, **NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE WHAT DREAMS ARE**. But the nice thing about this is that it doesn't matter if no one knows what dreams are, because we **EXPERIENCE** dreams for ourselves. So, we can explore and study our own dreams directly, and from these explorations come to our own conclusions about what our dreams are not.

Now, part of the problem is attitude. In our society in general dreams aren't given much credence. We generally associate dreams with fantasy and unreality. We definitely do NOT take dreams as seriously as our physical waking life. Or, if we do take dreams seriously it's usually at the level of those dream interpretation books you see in the supermarket checkout lines which provide you with pat, simple-minded explanations of what your dreams mean.

On more "intellectual" levels, we run into Freudian or Jungian-based ideas, nebulous ideas that do little to address the concrete fact that we all dream. These types of ideas, that focus on the symbolism or meaning of dreams, important though these views are in some respects, implicitly deny the concrete reality of the fact that our dreams are real experiences that happen to our consciousness. It's ironic when you think about it. Our society, with its physical sciences, has incredible knowledge and control over the physical forces of Nature (albeit a tenuous and perhaps deluded sense of control), yet, with our practical and literal mentality, we don't take the fact that

we dream literally. Dreams, are "symbolic", "subjective", "psychological", which implies they are not real, not objective events.

So, right from the start we pretty much have built into us by our very society a bad attitude about our dream experiences. Since society as a whole doesn't take dreams too seriously this creates a situation where we are, basically, completely ignorant of the nature of our dream experience. Thus, the first thing you, as a potential astral projector, need to do is to **CHANGE YOUR IDEAS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT WHAT YOUR DREAMS ARE.**

Consider this: When you dream, **you** are **somewhere** doing **something**. Right? Wherever you are when you dream, you definitely **EXIST**, right? Things are going on in your dreams: you are doing things, interacting with other people, being involved in situations, etc. So, to say dreams aren't real flies right in the face of your direct experience. For, when you dream, you are experiencing **something**. What you have to realize is that **YOUR DREAMS ARE REAL EXPERIENCES OF YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS.**

Basically, we all live a dichotomous life. We live two lives. One life we live here in the physical plane. The second life we live in the world where our dreams occur. They are both **REAL**. They are very different from each other, but each life is totally and completely real **IN ITS OWN TERMS**. See, the problem with how we look at our dream life stems from the fact that we try to interpret it in terms of our physical life.

Our physical life has certain characteristics, the most basic and important of which is our experience of **SPACE** and **TIME**. Both space and time have very definite properties in our normal waking life, and our entire mind and perception are conditioned by the properties of space and time as we know them here in the physical world. For example, we cannot see around a corner here in the physical world. Nor can we go backwards in time. Time is an overpowering factor in our waking experience. We were all born, we are all aging, and we shall all grow old and die; Time. These things are so fundamental, we take them completely for granted.

Now, given how fundamental time and space are, and given the fact that we take time and space so for granted, what we do then is interpret our dreams in terms of our physical experience with space and time. And of course, as each and every one of us knows **FROM OUR DIRECT EXPERIENCE**, our dreams make no sense whatsoever if we think of them in terms of our experiences here in the physical world. So, the normal "knee jerk" reaction is to conclude that dreams are **NOT** real, since, obviously, our physical experience **IS** real.

Well, this attitude assumes too much and takes way too much for granted. Isn't it completely possible that there is a logic to our experience in the world of dreams, a logic of its own that could be **DIFFERENT** from our physical waking experience? Could it be that, in the world of dreams, space and time behave **DIFFERENTLY** than they do here in the physical world? Could it be, perhaps, that the place where dreams occur is indeed a world of its own, a completely natural world with its own laws of space and time?

Such thinking takes us right back to the occult idea of the planes. The astral plane is the world in which dreams occur, and it is a world **DIFFERENT** from this physical world, which operates according to laws of Nature different from (but related to) the laws of Nature that operate here on the physical plane. I do not want to go off on this too deeply. What I am trying

to do here is to expose attitudes that we all possess and take for granted. The bottom line of what I'm getting at is trying to help you, the reader, realize that it IS very possible to think of your dreams as objective experiences occurring somewhere. Whether you buy into occult ideas or not doesn't matter. What matters is that you start to take your dreams seriously, that you begin to appreciate that, when you dream, **YOU ARE HAVING EXPERIENCES THAT ARE JUST AS REAL AS YOUR EXPERIENCES HERE IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD.**

This last statement you need to internalize, especially to be able to see the intimate connection between your dreams and your astral projections.

So, whether you want to believe that your dreams are experiences just as real as your experience of reading these words or not, I'm going to have to assume you will at least pretend for the time being that this is the case so I can go on with the discussion.

Having established that our dreams are real and objective experiences like our physical experiences, we need to look closely at the relationship between these dual lives that we all live. Let's now look at some facts about dreaming.

There are two facts that we need to consider, and each of these is something we have directly experienced. Most importantly, we will see that the key here is memory.

First fact: *we do not, as a rule, remember our dreams as well as we remember our physical experiences.*

Second fact: *When we are dreaming we generally do not remember the facts of our physical life, nor do we even realize we are dreaming and that we even live a physical life.*

Both of these are absolutely true. I have experienced this, and so have you, as has every other human on this planet. These are both very common facts about our existence. What we need to ask is: What do these facts **mean**?

First off, these two facts are two of the main reasons we don't treat our dream life as being equal to our waking life. There is no **continuity** between our dream and waking lives. For the average person, the dream and waking lives are mostly separate from each other. Sure, one may dream of events which occurred when awake, and even rarer, one may remember dream events that are relevant to one's waking life (such as déjà vu for example, or maybe a dream premonition). Generally speaking though, this discontinuity between our dream and waking life is the main thing that prevents our physical personality from IDENTIFYING with his or her dream personality.

We can look at these two facts from another angle though, and that is in terms of the relationship between our waking and dream selves. What is the one thing that can relate our waking personality with our dream personality? That thing is MEMORY. Memory is all important in this astral projection business. As far as I have discovered to this point THE ONLY

THING YOU CAN TAKE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND NONPHYSICAL WORLDS IS YOUR MEMORY.

Look at those two facts I listed above. What do they have in common? Memory. We cannot remember our dream experiences when we are here in the physical world, nor do we remember our physical experiences when we are in the dream world. Learning to astral project will change all this for you. Here now is a very functional definition of what astral projection *really* is: **ASTRAL PROJECTION IS A CONTINUITY OF MEMORY BETWEEN YOUR WAKING AND DREAM PERSONALITIES.**

This is a big time practical statement, folks! If you come to learn the truth of this statement by direct experience, then you *will* be a bona fide astral projector!

Now, for the first time in these notes we are ready to define what an astral projection is. It is a dream, but **AN ASTRAL PROJECTION IS A DREAM IN WHICH YOU ARE FULLY AWARE OF YOUR WAKING LIFE.** See, the term "lucid dream" normally refers to a dream in which you are aware that you are dreaming. Well, this is fine and all, but realizing that you are dreaming doesn't mean you realize your self-identity to the same extent you do while you are awake. In a full-scale projection experience, your self-identity in the projection is identical to your self-identity when awake here in the physical world. This is what I am trying to teach you how to achieve here: how to take your waking identity into the world where dreams occur. You can call this an OOBE if you want, or an astral projection, or a lucid dream. I don't care what you call it, I only care that you understand what it is you are trying to do. And again **WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DO IS TAKE YOUR WAKING MIND INTO THE DREAM WORLD.**

With this understanding you are now in a position to realize that **THERE IS A SPECTRUM OF AWARENESS BETWEEN DREAMS AND ASTRAL PROJECTIONS.** An astral projection is NOT a cut and dry thing. It is NOT a thing completely different from dreaming. Dreams bleed imperceptibly into astral projections. The criteria to determine if your experience is more a dream or more an astral projection is: to what extent have you brought your waking identity into the dream world? You can do this more or less. For me personally, I have conditioned myself to recognize when I am in the dream world.

Once I recognize I am in the dream world, then I consider myself "lucid", and I record the experience in my astral projection journal. That is to say, I draw the line between my dreams and my astral projections when I consciously recognize I am in the dream world during a dream. Rarely, I may not even remember my name, but if I remember that I'm "in that place again", then that is my criteria to say I have had a projection (or OOBE or whatever you want to call it).

When I project, I remember very clearly who I am in THIS physical world. I recognize that it is me, Don, but I realize to some extent or another that Don is no longer in the physical world. I realize that I am in some other world. To be absolutely honest with all of you, when I am in a projection I am completely amazed. That is the main thing I feel while projecting: amazement. I'm amazed that I am me, but I am not in the familiar world I know. I stand there (or float, or fly) and often, with intense curiosity just wonder where the hell I am at. It is my curiosity about where I am at that drives my behavior in my astral projections (most of the time at least). I will wander about and explore my environment. I will talk to the people I meet and ask them questions. If I

see books I will try to read them (reading is actually very difficult for me in a projection). I will study where I am at as closely as I can. That is what I do in projections, and it is because it is me, Don, the guy writing these words right now, but I'm not in this world - I'm somewhere else. And it just amazes the hell out of me.

Also, often in my projections, I remember what I've read in various books about astral projection and I'll try to do the things I've read about. This is one really important reason for reading as much as you can about projecting: it gives you ideas for things to do. In the next section I will offer some suggestions of what you can do once you are lucid in the dream world.

To tie all this together at this point, what you are trying to accomplish is to take your waking personality into your dreams. What this means is you want to build bridges between your waking and dream personalities. Basically, anything that will help you strengthen the connection between your waking personality and your dream personality will help you become an astral projector. And, as this section of the notes is entitled "Using Dreams As A Springboard To Astral Projecting", let's now look at what you can do in this regard.

Basically, all of your efforts will start with your physical personality. That is, YOU, the person reading these words, has to make the effort to break down the barrier that currently exists between you and the other you that lives in the dream world when the waking you sleeps. There is really only one being underlying these two lives, and that being is the greater "you" in which the waking and dream personalities dwell.

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

1. Remember your dreams.

This is really an important first step. You might want to keep a dream journal (as distinct from keeping an astral projection journal) just because of the simple fact that writing dreams down will help you remember them better.

Another exercise to do is this: when you wake up in the morning, before you do anything at all, just lay there in bed, relax and try to remember as much as you can about your dreams from that night. Block out any other thoughts that come into your mind. Often when you wake up you immediately start thinking about what you are going to do that day. Well, don't do that. Block those thoughts out. Instead, just relax and concentrate on your dreams. Usually when we wake up we have at least a trace of remembrance of that night's dreams. If you just relax and focus on what little you do remember, you'll be surprised to discover that automatically you will begin to recall other parts of the dream.

Both of these exercises will help strengthen the memory connection between your waking and dream personalities. This is very important, for when you start projecting, it is critical that you remember what you did during the projection once you return here to the physical plane. It's no good if you project, but forget all about your projection once your consciousness is back in the physical plane. If this happens, you've basically wasted your time. Take my word for it, it is very easy to forget your projections once you have returned back here to the physical world. It has happened to me a number of times.

Above I said that once you return from a projection you will want to record what happened to you during the projection. Well, the all- important prelude to recording your projections is remembering them.

If you don't remember your projections, you cannot write them down. Once you start projecting, not only do you want to get in the habit of recording your experiences, you also want to get into the habit of trying to remember your projection as completely as possible once you return to the physical plane.

What will happen is that the end of your projection will be marked by you returning to your body. You will know you have returned to your body because you will feel your body lying in bed, or however your body happens to be situated. Once you feel yourself back in your body, the absolute first thing you want to do is exactly what I said to do when you wake up in the morning: relax and try to remember as much as you can about what occurred during the projection. This may take up to 5 minutes. Then, once you've remembered as much as you can, you will want to get right up and write down everything you remember.

And again, just like with dreaming, if you take these first few moments to relax and try remembering your astral projection, you will be amazed at how easily you can remember what happened to you. The details of the projection will just pour into your mind. But you have to allow this to happen. If you just wake right up and make no attempt to remember, then chances are very good that you will forget many things that you could have otherwise remembered easily. Again, this is necessary discipline for being successful with astral projecting.

I really want to stress how easy it is to forget your projections once you've returned here to the physical world. Over time, as I became better at projecting, and after having completely forgotten a few really good projections almost upon waking, I actually got into the habit of remembering my projection while I was still in it! There have been a number of times when I was projecting that I would just sit in the projection and make a mental note of everything that had happened to me up to that point in the projection with the explicit purpose of remembering it once I was back in the physical. I have even had projections where I literally wrote down what was happening to me during the projection! I'm serious about this; I would find paper and pencil in the dream world and write down what was happening to me right in the middle of my projection! Needless to say, making such effort to remember my projection while I am actually in it makes it easier to remember once I am back here in the physical world.

So, this is something you may want to try once you find yourself lucid in the dream world: make very clear mental notes to yourself of what is happening to you with the explicit purpose of recording this information once you return here to the physical plane.

B. Self-conditioning exercises.

There are other exercises you can do to strengthen the memory connection between your dream and waking self. I will now discuss what I call "self-conditioning" exercises. These are very important and form the basic technique for becoming lucid in a dream. What I am about to say now are the common ideas you will find in technique books about astral projection (e.g., see Rogo, Ophiel, and Fox in the bibliography) for using dreams as a means to astral project.

"Self-conditioning exercise" means you are to plant suggestions in your mind. The idea is that if you keep telling yourself these things long enough, then they will happen. There are two suggestions you want to convince yourself of:

1. You **will** become lucid in a dream.
2. You will find clues in the dream itself to trigger off your lucidity.

Let's discuss each of these in turn. You must convince yourself that you will project. Only in rare cases will a person spontaneously project. For most of us, it requires a strong desire to want to achieve the projection experience for it to happen. In Rogo's book "Leaving the Body" he calls this the "Desire Method", and bases this method on ideas described in another astral projection book by a Frenchman named Yram. What this method entails is constantly desiring to astral project. You want to think about projecting as much as possible during your waking hours. You want to tell yourself such things as, "I **will** project", "I am going to learn how to project", etc. And what's more, you can't just say these things to yourself half-heartedly, you have to really work yourself up into believing these statements. You have to develop an almost stubborn persistence that, come hell or high water, you **will** project.

There are two things you are doing here. First, you are admitting to yourself that astral projection is a real thing. This is very important because any skepticism you have will only prevent you from projecting. By telling yourself that astral projecting **is** possible and that you **will** do it, you are opening up the possibility in your mind. Like anything else, you have to believe a thing is possible to do it.

The other thing you are doing here is mustering up the power of desire. As we all know, when we truly desire a thing, we obtain it much more readily than the things we don't care about. Desire is a very strong power in human affairs. Occultism teaches how to control desire to achieve your ends (this is also an important part of ritual magic). What you are doing by building up the desire to astral project is putting the power of desire behind your efforts. In a sense this is like a booster rocket on a space ship. Desire adds extra power to your attempts to project. Desiring to really achieve a projection can make the difference between being successful or being unsuccessful in your attempts to project.

I know the truth of this from personal experience. In my own case, during the times I have projected the most frequently, I had an almost one track mind. All I would think about was projecting. During the day I would read as many books as I could find about projecting and just desire more than anything else in the world to project. As I would go off to sleep at night (or when I would take a nap during the day) I would think about nothing but desiring to leave my body as I fell off to sleep. I hate to say it, but you just won't be able to astral project if you have a half-ass attitude about it. Astral projecting is not achieved by the half-hearted or the casual. Along with practicing the right exercises and developing the right attitudes and understanding, you have to **really** want to achieve the experience.

I can say with much certainty that the stronger your will to achieve a projection, the more likely you will actually project.

Now, let's consider the second suggestion you want to plant in your mind:

You will find clues in the dream itself to trigger off your lucidity.

This is the heart and soul of using dreams as a means to astral project. Again, this idea is taught in many books that explain how to astral project. The essence of this idea is as follows. We all know that things occur in dreams that are absolutely impossible in our waking life. It could be anything: maybe in your dream you know someone whom you do not know in physical life. Maybe you are in a familiar environment in your dream, but things are out of place. For example, you may be in your house in your dream, but the furniture is different in the dream, or there is something obviously different about your house in your dream. Or it may be something even more spectacular. Maybe in your dream you are seeing animals fly -- or even talk! Or you are seeing something occur in your dream that is simply impossible as far as physical life goes.

Now, here's the trick:

YOU WANT TO CONDITION YOURSELF SUCH THAT, WHEN YOU SEE ODD THINGS OCCURRING IN DREAMS, YOU WILL USE THESE ODD CIRCUMSTANCES AS A TRIGGER TO TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE IN THE DREAM WORLD.

Again, you have to think of your normal dreams and the fact that in your normal dreams, these odd circumstances usually do not even faze you. You need to begin by **remembering** these odd occurrences from your dreams. I'm sure all of you can think of something odd you saw in a dream that didn't faze you at all. As you remember such weird dream events, think to yourself, "the next time I see something like that happening in a dream, I will become aware that I am dreaming". If you work on this over and over, eventually it will happen: you will be in a dream, see something weird that could never happen in your waking life, and all of a sudden realize that you are dreaming.

When this actually happens, it is possible that you may actually **feel** something happen to you in the dream. For example, we all know the feeling you get when you have been sitting in a chair for a long time and then quickly get up. You experience a "headrush", where your skin becomes tingly, your vision may even disappear for an instant, and you hear a whooshing sound in your ears. On many occasions, when I have become lucid during a dream, I feel this exact sensation. I don't have the slightest idea why this happens, but it happens to me fairly regularly.

Another thing that may happen the first few times you recognize that you are in a dream is that you might wake up! You will see something weird going on in your dream, this will trigger you to become lucid, and all of a sudden you are awake lying in your bed! If this happens, don't become discouraged. This is very likely to occur to most of you. It is not bad when this happens, it is good. It is a sure-fire sign that you had your waking mind in the dream world, even if it was only for an instant. I have discovered that it is like a balancing act keeping your waking mind in the dream world. In a sense, your waking mind is "heavier" than your dream mind. I don't know how else to say this so just bear with me. Your dream mind is much more nimble at being in the dream world, which only makes sense. When you take your waking mind into the dream world, it is like trying to balance a quarter on the head of a pin. The slightest disturbance can cause your waking consciousness to fade out of the dream world. It will take some practice to get used to

having your waking mind in the dream world. I mentioned lockmolds above, and this is what the lockmold is all about; keeping the right balance that allows your waking mind to stay in the dream world for any amount of time.

Finally, it is very possible that the first time you become lucid in a dream (i.e. bring your waking mind into the dream world) that you will be perfectly stable. In this case **YOU'RE THERE!!** You made it! You are astral projecting. What to do at this point will be the subject of the next main section of these notes.

So, to wrap up this section on using dreams as a springboard for astral projecting, I will summarize the key points of this section and as well assign you specific exercises to do.

In summary, these are the key points of this section:

- A. You have to change your ideas about what your dreams are. You have to learn to accept dreams as a real and valid part of your experience as a living being.
- B. You need to start a journal of your experiences. If you want to have one journal for recording both dreams and astral projections, that is fine. If you want a separate journal for each, that is fine too. What ever you decide, you have to start writing down your experiences in the dream world.
- C. You have to appreciate that dreams and astral projections form a continuous spectrum of states of consciousness. A dream is when you are oblivious to your life here in the physical plane, an astral projection is a dream in which you are highly conscious of your life here in the physical plane. Your consciousness can be anywhere between these two extremes in actual practice.
- D. You need to strengthen your ability to remember what happens to you during dreams. This means you have to use your memory as a **BRIDGE** between your waking and dreaming experiences.
- E. The more desire you have to project, the more likely it is that you **will** project.
- F. You want to condition yourself to recognize when you are dreaming. This is most easily accomplished using the strange and weird events that occur in dreams as a trigger to becoming aware that you are in the dream world.

Finally, to end this section, here is a list of exercises:

- 1. When you wake up in the morning, before you think of anything else, try to remember as much about your dreams as you can.
- 2. Write down everything you remember about your dreams.
- 3. Write down a list of all the weird things you've seen happen in your dreams. (Not necessarily based on what you do for exercises 1 and 2, but write down **any** weird dream occurrences you remember. Don't forget, any "weird" dream occurrence is something that cannot happen, or is different from the way things are, in your physical life).
- 4. Throughout the day, stop and be aware of yourself. Think of who you are, where you live, and where you are at (i.e. home, school, work, etc.). When you do this, tell

yourself you are going to do the exact same thing when you are dreaming. Do this as often as you can throughout the day.

5. When you go to sleep at night, meditate on the following thought: "Tonight I will become aware that I am dreaming while I am dreaming. If I see anything weird happening in my dreams, then I will become aware that I am dreaming".

If you do these exercises, as well as the other exercises mentioned throughout the text, you will greatly enhance your chances of having an OOBE.

C. Trance Methods

We have seen how to use dreams as a means for achieving an astral projection. However, we have so ingrained our prejudice about the unreality of dreams, that simply taking your waking mind into the dream world somehow doesn't seem like all that big a deal, even given the fact that very few people actually do this. Becoming lucid during a dream just doesn't seem like the "real thing" to most people in terms of being a bona fide OOBE or astral projection. Well, I will continue to hammer home the point that it is; becoming lucid while dreaming is indistinguishable from other ways of getting your waking mind into the dream world. Still, it would be even more convincing that we were having a "real" astral projection/OOBE if there was some way that we could directly take our consciousness out of the physical plane without having to use dreams as an intermediary device. Well, happily there is such a direct method for getting to the inner planes, and this is a method I have used the most to achieve my astral projection experiences. For lack of a better term, I call this the "trance method", for it entails putting yourself into a trance.

Now, what is a trance? Frankly, I'm not sure if there is a precise definition of what a trance is. I know for sure that a trance is a state of consciousness in which you are no longer focused in the physical world. I know that you can achieve trance states through hypnosis and meditation, and the method I shall describe here is much like meditation. Knowing exactly what a trance is isn't very important for our purposes here. What is important for our purposes here is learning how to put yourself in a trance, which we shall discuss below.

Now, how is going into a projection from a trance different from going into a projection through a dream? Well, the difference is that, going into a projection through a trance is much more direct than going into a projection through a dream. By "direct" I mean that you do not fall asleep first. Your consciousness remains intact as you cross the border into the nonphysical planes. Thus, the immediate perception on your part will be of "leaving your body". You will be highly conscious of the act of dissociating from your physical body as you take your waking consciousness into the dream world. Once you are there, you will see that the experience is very much like the experience of being lucid in a dream, but it's the "getting there" that is different.

In the previous section we saw the connection between astral projections and lucid dreams. Becoming lucid in a dream - which again, means taking your waking mind into the dream state - is, essentially an astral projection. Likewise, in this section you will now appreciate the connection between the term OOBE and astral projection. Again, this is because when you enter the projection state via trance, you literally feel yourself leave your body. The more precise way to

say this is that you feel your consciousness *dissociate* from your physical body. I suspect that such a perception is more in line with people's ideas about what an OOB is. So, recalling what was said back in the section on theory, the difference between calling your trance-induced projection an "OOB" or an "astral projection" implies mostly your conception of where you go after you "leave" your body. Remember, generally the term OOB seems to imply that you are still in the physical world as a disembodied awareness, whereas the term astral projection implies you are in one of the nonphysical planes. When you learn to project via trance, you will be in a good position to see that your consciousness is no longer in the physical world. So, if we wanted to be proper about this we should call our experience an astral projection. But again, what you call it doesn't matter. What matters is that you can DO it.

Now, let us return to this idea that the trance method allows a continuity of your awareness across the border from the physical to the nonphysical planes. In my experiences with entering a projection through a trance, I have encountered one of two things happening to my consciousness - either: 1. there is no break in my consciousness and I directly enter into the projection experience, or 2. there is a momentary break in my consciousness, lasting only a split second, and then I am in the projection. In either case, the transition is very direct, unlike the dream method where you may be asleep for hours before becoming lucid. In the trance method you pretty much go directly from the physical plane to the projection state.

So, for starters, let me give an overview of the trance process, and then we will look at the whole process in great detail and lay out exactly what you need to do to project from a trance.

Going into trance starts out just like going to sleep. You lay on your bed and relax deeply. However, you do NOT fall asleep. What you do to go into a trance is **KEEP YOUR MIND AWAKE WHILE YOU LET YOUR BODY FALL ASLEEP.** We will go into how to do this below. If you are successful at keeping your mind awake while your body falls asleep, you will feel yourself "slip" or "push" out of your body. At that point you will either be somewhere in one of the planes, or you will be in the void. In either case, you are astral projecting (or having an OOB - whatever you prefer). You will then go through a series of adventures until something causes you to break your trance (such as the phone ringing, the need to go to the bathroom, or any other number of things). On occasion, while you are projecting, you may want to wake yourself up (if for example, you are in a threatening or scary situation), and I will also discuss how to do this. So that's the big picture from start to finish. Let's discuss each step of this process in detail.

1. Putting Yourself into a Trance

OK, you are lying on your bed with the intent to astral project. So what do you do now? First off, here are some general considerations for the kind of conditions that are best for going into trance:

1. Make sure you have gone to the bathroom first. If your physical body has to clean itself out, this will draw you right out of a projection.

2. It's best to be a little bit tired. You don't want to be super tired because you will just fall asleep! You don't want to be too awake or you will never be able to relax enough to go into trance.
3. Make sure your body is lying comfortably. You don't want your arm to fall asleep, or have your neck get sore because of the way it is cocked. I have found that if I lay on my back, with my head comfortably propped on a couple of pillows, and my arms lying stretched alongside my body, or wrapped over my chest, that I am fine. You will discover as you practice that there is one position that you find most comfortable, at least I did.
4. In general, you want to minimize all distractions. I have found that a little bit of noise from outside doesn't prevent me from going into trance. On the other hand, a ringing phone has pulled me from projections a number of times. Also, make sure your body temperature is comfortable.

OK, so now, you are lying in bed, a little tired, you don't have to go to the bathroom, it's quiet and you are comfortable, and you want to astral project. What next? Just relax. What you have to do at this point is begin the process I said above; you have to now try to put your body to sleep but at the same time allow your mind to stay awake. How do you do this?

Two things are now critical: concentration and relaxation.

You have to do both of these. You have to just stay relaxed, but, as you allow your body to relax, you have to KEEP YOUR MIND ALERT. How do you keep your mind alert? Basically, you can think about anything you want. Some people will tell you that you need to think about specific things, or visualize specific images, and you can do this if you want, but you don't have to. All you have to do is stay alert.

When I go into trance I don't meditate on anything specific. Instead I look into the darkness behind my closed eyes and just stare. I tell myself I want to leave my body, not merely just think the idea, but really *feel* that I want to leave. At the same time, I allow myself to relax.

The most important thing to think about is to stay aware. KEEP YOUR MIND FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF YOURSELF. That is what is most critical: stay LUCID. It's because you let go of your self-awareness that you eventually just fall asleep and slip unconsciously into the dream world. What you want to do is to move *consciously* into the dream world. Think about whatever you want, but when your mind starts wandering off too far or you start daydreaming too much, bring your awareness of yourself back to the front of your mind. This is really important because, if you watch yourself fall asleep at night, you will notice that your mind just kind of randomly starts wandering through thoughts. The thoughts can be about anything: what happened to you that day, whatever you are worried about, some-one you love, anything. What you will notice going off to sleep is that you get lost in your thoughts. Next thing you know, you are waking up in the morning with maybe a faint memory of the dreams you had as you slept. You DO NOT want to let this happen when you go into trance. It's OK to let your mind wander, but constantly keep bringing your mind back to an awareness of you lying on the bed trying to astral project. IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU REMAIN SELF-AWARE.

All the while of course, you are continuing to relax. At a certain point you may feel your body become heavy, as if you are beginning to drop off to sleep. This is OK. As a matter of fact this is what you want to happen.

At this point, I want to really go in detail about how I go into trance. If not for any other reason, this will be illustrative of one particular way to successfully get into trance (i.e. "monkey see, monkey do"). You may find what I do works for you, or, as you practice, you may discover things that work for you that are different than what I do. That's fine. The bottom line here is: **WHATEVER WORKS.**

There are two things I focus on as I go into trance:

1. I stare into the darkness behind my closed eyes.
2. I stay completely aware of the sensation of my body laying on the bed.

What happens when I go into trance is that, as I focus on both of these things, as my relaxation deepens, my perception of both of these things changes. That is to say, the darkness I am staring into transforms, and I will see images in this darkness. And the feeling of my body laying on my bed changes too. I now will discuss each of these in detail. Let me make this perfectly clear: **THE CHANGES IN WHAT I SEE AND HOW I FEEL MY BODY ARE WHAT ALLOW ME TO "LEAVE" MY BODY.** That is to say, as far as I'm concerned, these next couple topics are the heart and soul of these notes; how to really "leave" your body.

This is it gang! Pay attention!

As I go through the next few paragraphs, please keep in mind that what I am describing is all occurring at the same time. Just to keep it straight, all of the following things are going on simultaneously as I go into trance:

1. I am staring into the darkness behind my closed eyes.
2. I am aware of the sensations of my body.
3. I am relaxing deeper and deeper.
4. I am thinking to myself "I am going to leave", "I am going to project", and similar thoughts. And I am anticipating certain changes in what I see in the darkness behind my closed eyes and how my body feels. I am waiting for these changes to occur so that I can "project" or "leave" or whatever you want to call it.

All this said, let's now discuss the changes in what I see and what I feel as I go into trance.

a) Hypnogogic Imagery

I stare into the darkness behind my closed eyes. If you stare into this darkness you will soon come to see that it's not just a flat blackness. Not only is it NOT a black nothing in the darkness behind your closed eyes, but if you look closely you will see that there is something moving in the darkness behind your closed eyes! What I see is what looks like zillions of little pin pricks of electric yellow light and these pin pricks seem to be moving in a way that's hard to put into words. And the image itself is faint and not easy to focus on at all.

I WANT TO MAKE PERFECTLY CLEAR AT THIS POINT THAT WHEN I SAY I "SEE" ANYTHING FROM THIS POINT OUT, I AM BEING TOTALLY LITERAL. I AM

NOT TALKING ABOUT MAKING THINGS UP, OR SEEING SOMETHING IN MY IMAGINATION. I AM NOT VISUALIZING ANYTHING IN MY MIND'S EYE. I AM LITERALLY DESCRIBING THINGS I SEE. NONE OF THIS IS FANTASY OR MAKE BELIEVE. I ACTUALLY SEE THINGS BEHIND MY CLOSED EYES.

I just want to make sure you understand this. Anyone who has had any experiences with altered states of consciousness knows exactly what I am talking about. For those of you who have never had the kinds of experiences I'm describing here you will just have to accept what I am saying. If you practice the exercises I prescribe, there is a very good chance you will have these same types of experiences and then you too will know what I am talking about.

I'm sorry to dwell on this, but let me say it again. Right now, imagine what you look like. Now imagine what your mother looks like. OK. Now, you just "saw" images didn't you? What you just did was *imagine* your and your mother's face. You created these images in your mind's eye. THIS IS NOT WHAT I AM DESCRIBING HERE. As I said, from here on out when I say I "saw" this or that, I literally mean that I *saw* it. It is totally different from seeing something in my mind's eye. As a matter of fact, for example, while I see these little pinpricks of light, I can imagine whatever I want in my mind's eye. They are two different processes.

OK, I hope this is clear!

Now, these little moving pin pricks of light are not just something I am making up. Psychologists have discovered these things and call them "ideoretinal light" (you will also see the terms "eigenlicht" and "entopic lights" - see the reference by Mavromatis in the bibliography). Many people see these little lights and psychologists have recorded many cases of it. Many people can see these little lights superimposed over their normal vision, that is, when their eyes are open. I can. Maybe you can too.

Right now, just shut your eyes and stare into the darkness. What do you see? Stare specifically into this darkness, try to focus on it. Shut off the lights in the room or wait until night time, and do this again in the darkness. Try to make sense out of what you see behind your closed eyes.

Chances are good that, in staring into the darkness behind your closed eyes, you too can see the ideoretinal lights. Perhaps you can see other things if you stare closely; maybe faint colors moving around in hard to describe ways, maybe even faint outlines of pictures. You might see after-images of what you were looking at right before you closed your eyes. Wait for these after-images to fade and THEN stare behind your closed eyes and try to figure out what you see. Different people see different things behind their closed eyes. What is important is that 1. you learn that you CAN see things behind your closed eyes, and 2. that you stare at whatever you can see behind your closed eyes while you are trying to go into trance.

Back to the ideoretinal lights. Most psychologists assume that these little moving lights are some kind of effect of your eye randomly interacting with light. They explain these little dots as the effect of light randomly bouncing around inside your eye and triggering off the retina, thus sending nerve impulses to the brain, where these random bouncing light particles get perceived as this ideoretinal light. Be this as it may, on the basis of my experiences studying this ideoretinal light, I have come to the conclusion that IDEORETINAL LIGHT IS A DOORWAY TO THE

ASTRAL PLANE. Quite a different conclusion from the psychologists, eh? <g> Let's get into what I mean.

So, back to my trance experiences. I'm staring into the darkness behind my closed eyes and I see the ideoretinal light. I watch it move and wave around in the peculiar way it does. As my body continues to relax, at a certain point, the darkness behind my closed eyes no longer looks "flat". It transforms and now takes on a 3 dimensional appearance. It looks like a space back there now that I could reach into if I wanted to. However, I cannot reach into it, because at this point I can still feel my arms laying against my bed. Nonetheless, I am looking into this space of darkness, and this space is now swirling in a weird, subtle fashion and I can still see the ideoretinal lights swirling in this dark space.

It's actually very important to correlate these changes in my vision with the changes in the feeling of my body. That is, these changes happen at the same time. As my relaxation deepens, my breathing becomes very quiet and regular, I start to feel heavy, like one feels as they are falling off to sleep, except I don't fall asleep.

As this heaviness comes over me, it is about at this time that the darkness behind my eyes becomes like a dark space that I could reach into. I may feel a wave of relaxation sweep over me. For people out there who know about brain waves, I suspect that I am entering the alpha brain wave state at this point. Alpha brain waves indicate a state of deep relaxation. But I am still conscious of my body lying on the bed, and I can still hear sounds occurring outside or elsewhere in the house.

However, it is shortly after this point (i.e. the onset of the alpha state, which corresponds to a feeling of deep relaxation) that really weird things start to happen in the darkness behind my closed eyes. Any number of things have happened to me at this point, so I will only describe a few of them.

One thing that is relatively common is that I will see a flash of purple appear in the darkness behind my closed eyes. It's as if one of the little yellow pinpoints flared up into a bright purple flash, but only for a split instant. I see it and it's gone.

Another really weird thing I've seen is that one of the little yellow lights will flare up, and **open up** into what looks like a little circular window! Sometimes it just stays open for an instant but I can't see anything in it, and then it shuts. Other times, one of the yellow lights will flare up this way and I can actually see something in it, as if I'm looking through a tiny little window! Once I saw trees through such a little window. Another time I saw an open doorway. When the yellow lights flare in this fashion, the image lasts longer than the purple flashes. The purple flashes come and go, but these little "windows" have stayed open for a number of seconds sometimes.

And once I start seeing things like this in the darkness behind my closed eyes, basically this is where the dam breaks, so to speak, and I begin to see all kinds of other amazing things. So, at this point, I have to tangent off and introduce an idea that is very relevant and important here.

The name of this section of the notes is "Hypnogogic Imagery". When you see stuff in the darkness behind your closed eyes, it is called "hypnogogic imagery". In the bibliography, I reference a book by Mavromatis, and this book is called "Hypnagogia". This is a whole book

about hypnogogic imagery. This is a critical topic to study for anyone interested in astral projection, as will be clear below, and I highly recommend this book for any serious student of astral projection.

In a nutshell, YOU WILL SEE HYPNOGOGIC IMAGERY AS YOUR TRANCE DEEPENS. In effect, the hypnogogic imagery is a signpost saying, "astral projection getting close". That is, ONCE YOU START SEEING HYPNOGOGIC IMAGES, IT WILL ONLY BE A SHORT TIME AFTER THIS THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LEAVE YOUR BODY.

Let me digress now. First I will give you some background on what is known and currently thought about hypnogogic images, then I will describe some of the hypnogogic images I have seen.

Again, the psychologists have known about hypnogogic images for around 100 years now. The word "hypnogogia" refers to the state of consciousness right at the border between waking and sleeping. I mentioned this state earlier, and that is its name; hypnogogia. Some psychologists refer to hypnogogia as the border state when you are falling asleep, and refer to the border state as you are waking up as "hypnopompic". This distinction really doesn't matter because they both refer to the same state of consciousness; the border between sleeping and being awake. So, I will use the term hypnogogia to refer to this state whether you are falling asleep **or** waking up. Now, in terms of astral projection, we are really only concerned about hypnogogia as you fall asleep, because when you "wake up" from an astral projection, it is immediate. When a projection ends, it ends. There is no hypnopompic state in an astral projection. Your consciousness will transfer instantly from the projection back here to the physical plane.

Hypnogogia was a phenomenon discovered by people interested in understanding how dreams form. What was discovered in this research was that before people actually start to dream, a large majority of people will see images, very clear images, behind their closed eyes, and while they are still pretty much awake. This "pre-dream" imagery was called hypnogogic imagery. The imagery itself has no pattern. One may see faces, scenes, landscapes, weird colors, colored smoke clouds, twinkling lights, nightmare visions, anything. And for some people, they may even have hypnogogic smells and sounds. That is, not only do some people see images in the hypnogogic state, but they will hear sounds or smell things. In a nutshell, there is no good explanation for what causes hypnogogic images. If you want to see the theories psychologists are kicking around, check out the book by Mavromatis.

This is about all I will say here about the study of hypnogogia. It's a fascinating topic for anyone interested in dreams, altered states of consciousness or astral projection. Again, I encourage you to look up Mavromatis' book "Hypnogogia" to learn more about this topic.

For our purposes here the important thing to realize is that, as I said, when you induce a trance in yourself, you will pass through the hypnogogic state BEFORE you can leave your body. Again, seeing the hypnogogic images means, "you're almost there". What determines when you are actually ready to leave will be discussed below. Before going into that, I would like to list some of my own experiences in the hypnogogic state so that you have some idea of what it is like if you've never experienced it before. Again, the following quotes are excerpts from my astral projection journal, specifically of hypnogogic images I saw prior to leaving my body. You should note the variety and unpredictability of these images.

1>

"...I began to lose my lockmold and felt myself fading away. Could feel myself in my physical body again. Could see hypnogogic images behind my closed eyelids. It looked like a duck staring at me-but I really don't know what it was, it wasn't moving though. What was really unique though is that the image was undulating like: (drawing in my notes). It looked like the undulations produced by dropping two rocks in the water. The bottom undulation was covering some type of landscape. Lost the image and woke up."

2>

"Felt myself laying on my bed but I still felt like I could "leave." I began to see hypnogogic images of outdoor scenery; trees, houses, blue sky overhead. I "jumped" into the images and was on a suburban city street..."

3>

"Today's experiences consisted solely of hypnogogic imagery. I have no recall of having actually left my body. Through the descriptions that follow, I was conscious of laying on my bed in my physical body.

"a. I saw undulations for a brief period. These undulations looked like someone had dropped a rock in the water, except they went backwards, from the periphery to the center. The undulations occurred in the darkness behind my closed eyes."

"b. The undulations faded and I was watching the darkness behind my closed eyes. I perceived a circular swirling motion between my eyes and this motion became like an expanding hole. In the hole I saw a woman's face. It was the face of a mature, older woman (maybe late 30s) and she had black hair. The face then transformed into a deformed version of itself. The jaws became grotesque and large and facial hair appeared. The face transformed again to that of an ape-like creature, though it still bore a direct resemblance to the original face. This third face had a rounder skull and less pronounced cheeks and jaw than the first face. These images were in full color and looked like photographic stills."

"c. The ape-woman face faded. I then saw the face of a man. He appeared to be engaged in a conversation, though I could not hear anything. He looked to be from the 19th century by his dress. This image was animated though it was in black and white."

"d. The image of the talking man faded. I felt a sinking feeling, or a wave of relaxation overtake me. My eyes were closed but my entire visual field was visible. In it there was a beautiful, dynamic panorama of swirling blues before me. It was a little darker than sky blue. It had an amorphous shape. It seemed to be framed by something that I could not identify. This image faded." "I continued concentrating and now a light purple mist, like a thin smoke cloud was before me. This faded." "I continued, though very relaxed, to concentrate on my visual field. A definite pattern appeared before me. It was a very strange image, not easy to describe. It was

cartoon textured and colored in various shades of red, gray and off-white. It was slightly reminiscent of an Egyptian hieroglyphics text, but only slightly. It looked like a pattern of glyphs, but there was a woman's face and an outline of a body also in the pattern, though they looked abstract and not literal. The pattern moved three times. When it moved, it looked like "fire" or some molten looking liquid, welling up at one point in the pattern and going to and filling in another point in the pattern, almost like if you had two open pop bottles, one filled and the other empty, and the liquid flowed out of the filled one into the empty one. I really had no idea of what I was seeing here. This then faded and I fell asleep and went through a series of dream sequences, and I was barely bordering on being lucid."

Finally, one more:

4>

"...I felt myself laying on my bed back in my physical body. I relaxed and stared into the blackness behind my closed eyelids. Almost immediately, hypnogogic imagery began to appear. The images were very vivid and in color. I was seeing faces of dark skinned people. They looked like the painted faces of Native American Indians. There was an unusual effect that I would see a face from one particular angle, then the face would shift its angle and become a different face. After the faces had stopped "rotating", they spun off into the background and I could see all of them balled together, and they were wrapped up in an American flag." "As the image moved further away I tried to push myself out towards it. It worked and I was now standing in my new room in the attic. I floated up through the roof to the outside..."

So, that gives you a little taste of the content of these hypnogogic images. There is no apparent rhyme or reason to them as far as I can tell. For a while I tried to figure out if there might be some kind of symbolic meaning to these images, but I gave up on this because a lot of these images are completely abstract and don't even make any sense when you look at them.

There is one special type of hypnogogic image I would like to mention, that may occur to you. This is, you will be lying there relaxing and going into trance, and all of a sudden, you are staring at the room you are in clear as day. It's as if you are seeing your room through your closed eyelids! This can happen and has happened to me pretty frequently. It might even be the first hypnogogic image you see during any trance session. What's important to realize is that if this happens to you, you should recognize that it *is* a hypnogogic image, and, like any hypnogogic image, use it as a clue to the fact that you are close to being able to leave your body. Usually when this happens, the image of your room will fade and will be followed by more hypnogogic images.

Finally, one last word about hypnogogia. I mentioned above that there are no good explanations about what causes hypnogogia. What I mean by this is that **psychologists** have no good explanations of what causes hypnogogia. On the other hand, occultists do have good explanations of what hypnogogia is, except they do not call it hypnogogia. What a psychologist calls "hypnogogia", an occultist calls "clairvoyance". That is, seeing these images is a form of

clairvoyance. What causes clairvoyance, according to occultists, is transferring your consciousness from the physical body to the Etheric or astral or mental bodies. The actual explanation gets more involved and actually involves the theory of the chakras.

It is not my intention to explain chakras here. I only mention this so that the interested reader can go explore on his own. Good starting references are two books by C.W. Leadbeater:

"The Chakras" and "Clairvoyance". Both these are listed in the bibliography. For those of you who already know about chakras, in two of the quotes I have above from my journal, I make reference to seeing a spinning thing that looks like the waves made by dropping a rock in the water. I believe these were direct perceptions of my own chakras (specifically, my third-eye chakra).

Also, I need to say this: DONT BE AFRAID OF ANY HYPNOGOGIC IMAGES YOU SEE. It's possible that you might see rotting bodies or something else that is grotesque and disgusting. Don't let it phase you. These images can't hurt you at all. No matter what you see, just remember that what's important is the fact that you are seeing anything at all. Even if the image is weird or ugly, it doesn't matter. What matters is that you are close to leaving your body. And just as important, if you do see something that startles you, RELAX YOURSELF IMMEDIATELY. Stare calmly at anything you see no matter how flipped out it appears. If you get too worked up, you will break your trance. You do NOT want to break your trance. Remember, all the while this is going on, you are trying to go into deeper and deeper states of relaxation.

So, to wrap up this discussion of hypnogogia, the important point to drive home is that you will pass through hypnogogia on your way to the astral projection state. Now, this won't always happen, but it will happen more often than not.

Now, let's go on to the other important aspect of putting yourself in trance: paying attention to your body sensations.

b) Kinesthetic Sensation

Being aware of the sensation of your body is called "kinesthetic sensation". According to the dictionary I'm holding, the definition of kinesthetics is:

"a sense mediated by nervous elements in muscles, tendons and joints and stimulated by body movements and tensions; also: sensory experience derived from these sources."

To put this into English; kinesthetic sensation is your awareness of your body and its movements. This is a form of perception too, just like seeing, or hearing, etc. Being aware of where your arm is at, being aware of the feeling of your butt as you sit on a chair, feeling your fingers wiggle, these and other like sensations are kinesthetic sensations. Being aware of the feeling of my body lying on my bed as I try to go into trance is a kinesthetic sensation. Focusing on my kinesthetic perceptions is a critical part of how I go into trance.

I said that I focus on the feeling of my body lying on the bed, and that as my trance deepens, my kinesthetic sensations CHANGE. You can use these kinesthetic feelings, not only as a way to keep your awareness focused, but also as a clue as to when you can actually leave your

body. As a matter of fact, **THE WAY THAT I KNOW I CAN LEAVE MY BODY IS BECAUSE OF THE CHANGES IN MY KINESTHETIC SENSATIONS.** The feeling of my body changes, and it is by these changes that I know I can "leave my body". Let me describe these changes for you.

At first, you are aware of the feeling of your body lying on the bed. You are a little bit tired, so you are relaxing. As your relaxation deepens, you will feel your body get heavier. As I said above, you may feel a wave of relaxation sweep over your body. You may also feel your skin tingle or you may feel waves like little chills moving through your body.

Let me tangent for a moment to discuss something that may have happened to you as you were falling off to sleep. Have you ever gone to bed, felt yourself getting more and more relaxed, and then all of a sudden felt yourself slip? I am not talking about having your arm or leg jerk or anything like that. I am talking about having actually felt your body falling or sliding off the bed. If this has happened to you, chances are good that it startled you and caused you to wake up. If you have ever felt such sensations, then realize that **THIS IS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE WHEN YOU LEAVE YOUR BODY.**

Again, you are getting more and more relaxed. You feel your body getting heavier and heavier. Finally, all of a sudden, it feels like your body is slipping backwards, or that you are falling, or that your body is slipping forward, or that your body is floating gently downwards. All of these are possible kinesthetic sensations that you may experience. Prior to this you may or may not have been seeing hypnogogic images. Whatever the case, when this happens **DO NOT GET STARTLED.** Just go with the feeling, because when this happens, **YOU ARE LEAVING YOUR BODY.** You want to anticipate this happening. When it does start happening, you will be falling, sliding, slipping, or whatever, in complete darkness. Don't worry about the darkness either. This darkness is the void I mentioned. It's OK to be in the void. What will be happening at this point is that you will be falling, slipping, etc., through the void. At this point, **YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR BODY. YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR BODY.** You are in the void.

If you find this happening to you, here's what to do. You can right yourself and "fly" through the void if you want to. You **can** move through the void. There is nothing going on, but you can move through it if you want. Like I said, the void is a nice place to just sit (or fly) and enjoy the quiet.

If you want to cause yourself to appear somewhere in one of the planes/subplanes, **TRY TO LOOK AT YOUR HANDS.** You might find it a little difficult to pull your hands up in front of your face, but just do it anyway. What you will see at first is that you have no hands! Just stare at where it feels like your hands are. Wiggle your fingers, try to flail your arms. What will happen is that you will see your hands and arms form in front of you! At the same time, **YOU WILL CAUSE A SCENE TO MATERIALIZE AROUND YOU.** In effect, by doing this "hands trick", as I call it, what you are doing is tuning into a subplane, just like tuning into a radio station on the radio. The next thing you know, you will be **somewhere.** At this point, **YOU ARE SOMEWHERE IN THE PLANES.** We will talk in detail in the next section about what you can expect in terms of where you appear, and what to do once you appear somewhere.

Another thing you can do to get out of the void is **SPIN YOURSELF AROUND LIKE A TOP.** Just spin yourself around as fast as you can, and, just like with the "hands trick", you will

cause yourself to appear somewhere. I have used both the spinning trick and the hands trick numerous times to leave the void and enter the subplanes.

Now, appearing in the void is NOT the only thing that can happen to you when you leave your body. A number of other things can occur too. These are as follows.

It is also very likely that, as your relaxation deepens, and your body gets heavier and heavier, and you may or may not be seeing hypnogogic images, **YOU WILL BLACKOUT**, but only for a split instant. That is, you will lose your consciousness, but only for a moment. In an instant you will be conscious again, but you will no longer feel yourself lying on your bed, and you will no longer be looking into the darkness behind your closed eyes. You will regain your awareness after this momentary blackout and **YOU WILL BE ASTRAL PROJECTING**. You will be somewhere in the dream world, fully lucid. You could be anywhere: you may be standing in your room, you may be standing in a foreign house, you could be somewhere you recognize or somewhere that is unfamiliar to you. Whatever the case, you will be somewhere and you will be astral projecting.

Now, another thing that can happen to you is that you are lying on your bed getting more and more relaxed, and you begin to see hypnogogic images. It is possible, as one of my journal entries above shows, that **YOU CAN JUMP DIRECTLY INTO A HYPNOGOGIC IMAGE**. You may be staring at a scene of a city street, or maybe a scene of a forest or, as I mentioned, you may be looking at the room you are in. You can try to "push out" into the scene itself. As your relaxation continues to deepen you will possibly feel other things, as I mentioned above: tingles on your skin, chills moving through your body. Also, you might hear strange sounds like creaking or whooshing or chains rattling. All of these sensations are characteristic of what you will experience as you cross the border from the waking state to the projection state. Don't be alarmed by any of this. It is all perfectly natural.

Finally, as you practice and get more used to the kinesthetic sensations associated with leaving your body, what will happen is that eventually you will just **know** that you can "push out" of your body. Sometimes, this "pushing out" sensation will feel like you are squirming out of your body. Other times it will feel like you really are pushing outward. It may also feel like you are falling off your bed. Any number of sensations are possible. The point is, you can **ACTIVELY** push out of your body. Above I spoke about just letting yourself "fall" into the void, and this method of leaving your body is purely **PASSIVE**. You can passively leave your body or you can actively push out of your body. Both ways work. As you get better at projecting, you will find that most of the time you will actively push out of your body.

To summarize at this point, what you want to do is pay attention to your kinesthetic sensations. These are the clues as to when you have left your body. The dissociation process will occur naturally and spontaneously. It does every night when you go to sleep and dream. The only difference here is that you are attempting to take your waking consciousness across the border with you. And, as time goes on, and you practice, you will eventually get used to the sensation of dissociating from your body, and you will just know when it's the right time to "jump out" into the OOB.

So, let me now summarize this trance method:

1. You will lie down in a comfortable place with the intent to project.
2. You will allow yourself to relax ever more deeply while at the same time, you will keep your mind focused on your self-awareness.
3. You can stare into the darkness behind your closed eyes and wait for hypnogogic images to appear.
4. You should stay very conscious of your kinesthetic sensations.
5. Expect the following to occur:
 - A. Your body will feel more and more heavy as your relaxation deepens.
 - B. You will probably see hypnogogic images.
 - C. You should anticipate any of the following changes in your kinesthetic sensations:
 1. Tingles and chills in your body.
 2. A feeling of slipping, falling, floating.
 3. A possible momentary blackout.
 4. Recognition that you can actively push out of your body.

Now, I must make very clear that the transition from the feeling of lying in your bed, to the feeling that you are no longer lying in your bed can take on an immense number of forms. There is NO one "correct" set of sensations. Almost anything is possible. What I have described above are the things I feel and perceive when I go into trance and try to leave my body. You may or may not feel and perceive the same things. However, what I have described above gives you something with which to get started. I have given you specific things to look for and expect. Chances are good that you will experience the same things I have described here, or experience something very similar.

To wrap up this section on using the trance method to leave your body, I am going to list a number of my actual experiences of this transition. Again, these are actual entries out of my astral projection journal.

I want to say that what you can perceive while entering into the astral projection state is completely amazing. I am always totally blown away by what happens in the transition from waking to projecting. And this is just the transition into the projection state - we have not even had our projection yet! But this borderland is completely amazing.

I started out saying that it doesn't seem like you are leaving your body when you simply become lucid during a dream (as I described how to do in the previous section of these notes). However, once you've experienced the transition from waking to projecting, that is, once your awareness has directly passed through the borders between waking and projecting, you will be totally convinced that you have really "left your body". What I've described in this section is as real as it gets!!!! I wish you all good luck getting to, and getting across this borderland!

With all the above said, let me now present for you some of my adventures on the border between waking and projecting.

D. Don's Actual Experiences On The Border Between Waking And Projecting

So, here they are, right from my astral projection journal. Remember, these are all just excerpts of my experiences with the **transition** from being awake to being in a projection. I have purposely left out the description of my subsequent projections from these entries. We will discuss what it's like during an astral projection in the next section of these notes.

As you read the following entries, try to keep in mind what I described in the previous file. You will see every possible combination of the sensations you can expect as you enter the projection state.

Also, the parenthetical remarks are comments I have added to highlight certain features of each entry to which you should pay attention.

1>

(This was my very first projection experience back in 1987.)

"All I remember about my first willed projection is that I had gone to bed with the intent to project. After dozing off, at some point I became aware of the fact that I was looking at my bedroom, though I could feel that my eyes were closed. I was also very afraid, and the fear was of the quality that I had experienced years earlier: I was afraid but I didn't know why, and there was no apparent reason for my fear. I remember that something that seemed like a paper-maché snake was sticking out of my wall and biting my hands.

But I could not feel anything except the fear sensation. I struggled and tried to pull away from the snake creature. Eventually, the fear response became so great that I could no longer bear it and I woke up."

2>

"I awoke and attempted to travel. Felt my body falling back to sleep. In my third eye I felt myself sliding down a gigantic cliff. When I let go I was outside of my body. It seemed like I slid out through my feet. I flew out of my bedroom into the back yard..."

3>

(Note here how I saw hypnogogic images prior to leaving my body. This is also an example of blacking out before leaving)

"Looking at an aura from on the inside of it that looked like the modern one in Master D.K.'s book. Gray background, orange red and black pictures in it, but more like glyphs than photos. I felt uncomfortable looking at it because of what I thought the colors meant. Then as I was looking, a jet or spray of red particles in a fine mist seemed to emit from me!

The aura seemed to be either revolving around me or it was changing its appearance as I looked at it. It appeared like it was on a concave wall, like the inside of a bowl. I saw other "weird" things while I was stationary on my bed but can't remember them. A large featureless fish seemed to swim past me. I blacked out. When I regained my vision I was standing on steps leading down into what appeared to be a basement laundromat..."

4>

(Here is an example of me using the hands trick. This occurred during the middle of a projection though. Notice that I ended up tuning into one of the lower subplanes)

"Then I faded out of the lockmold and was back in the void again.

I tried my newly discovered hand trick again. This time I got strange results. I saw my hand appear, kind of ghost like and transparent, then disappear as I withdrew my immediate attention from trying to feel/move it. I re-concentrated on feeling it. Now I was looking at my palm, thumb and about 1/2 of one finger. This kind of grossed me out cause it looked like melted wax or something where the rest of my hand should have been. Then I watched my other fingers "grow" or materialize, first as stumps, then they formed into my fingers. Then I got the idea to try to feel both hands, then my legs and feet. I was literally wiggling my whole body. This seemed to cause the void to disappear and make me phase in to a new lockmold. Again, wherever I was felt desolate and dingy..."

5>

(Here is an active, "push out" example)

"Laid concentrating, felt myself escape. I was in a purple cocoon, plastic like, surrounding me. I shut my eyes and flew/pushed my way through it. Went upwards. I was in an unfamiliar small bedroom on the second story. I got the impression I was up over my bedroom, but everything was unfamiliar..."

6>

(Here's an example of the problems you may encounter when trying to push out of your body. In this case I pushed out into the void, but used the hands trick to cause myself to materialize. There is another trick here which I use to keep my lockmold strong.

Note that this occurred during the middle of a projection, but the ideas are the same as at the beginning of a projection.) "Was back in my physical body, very close to being awake. I could hear sounds outside, feel the bed under me, etc. But I didn't want it to end yet so I laid there trying to fall back into it. As my trance was deepening, or my concentration was getting stronger, I had the momentary experience of simultaneously being in my physical body lying on my bed, but also of floating half way

out of my physical body. I tried to jump out. I could only see the void, but it didn't feel like I went anywhere. I jumped out 4 or 5 times but, even though I felt myself jump, it didn't seem like I was "out". Finally though I felt "out". I was in the void, but I could definitely see the silhouette of my bedroom around me.

I tried intensely to materialize. I achieved a partial materialization. I was standing there in my room, looking at my arms. My hands weren't there, there were only stumps that looked melted. But I could "feel" my hands. I tried wiggling my fingers and they appeared, but only slightly. My hands looked like melted stumps with barely visible, practically transparent fingers wiggling around on them. And I was having a difficult time maintaining my lockmold. I remembered how hugging the counter in that bar had helped stabilize my lockmold, so I grabbed my chair with my transparent hands, and I could feel myself stabilize. I hugged the chair with my body trying to be as conscious as I could of the sensation of my body up against the chair. I stayed like this until I felt confident to move. Once my lockmold stabilized, I was surprised by how lucid I felt. I felt completely awake and lucid and I was in awe at how real everything seemed around me. My mind began to race. What should I do with my lucidity, what can I explore?..."

7>

(Here's an example of me becoming lucid in a dream)

"I was in a dream, walking down an unfamiliar street in an unfamiliar neighborhood, and for no apparent reason, it dawned on me that I was dreaming. I figured it was best to stay cool about the fact and not get excited, so I kept walking and stayed casual. Yet now I was completely aware of my environment. It was very vivid. I was on a boulevard walking past a rather large school...."

8>

(Here's an example of no break in consciousness while entering the projection)

"Totally conscious transfer to projection, there was no break in my consciousness. I was laying on my bed. Felt that "sinking" feeling of relaxation. Saw a gray pattern and "swam" into it.

The pattern took on a more geometric form around me, like a checker board, but it was like moving static as well. When the static cleared I was flying about a department store..."

9>

(A nice illustration of entering the projection state)

" Was very tired and went into trance easily. Laid concentrating for a bit and eventually scenes began forming in my third eye (i.e. hypnogogic images). I relaxed and pushed myself out, actually I kind of "fell" out. I was in the void but it was only a very

light gray smoky mist this time. I stared into it and it formed into a nicely colored pattern. I thought to myself, "now this is the astral plane." What I saw was an orange-yellow light centered and somewhat off in the distance. Surrounding this, or emanating from it was a bluish-purple mist that faded into black at the periphery. The scene eventually faded.

I was back in my physical body and pushed myself out again. This time I was standing in my new bedroom..."

10>

(Another example of being at the border. This also illustrates how you may be somewhere that is familiar but it is also different.)

"I remember standing at the edge of some kind of "opening", in what I don't know. The opening was surrounded by clouds and darkness. Through the opening I could see dancing color patterns that looked like a lightning storm. The only colors I remember were flashing yellows and whites, on a dark background. I stood there watching for a moment but I don't recall what happened next. I had the realization I could leave my body. I jumped out and was in a room that resembled my room at Dad's house, except none of my stuff was there and the walls were white plaster..."

11>

(Here's an example of how confusing it can be sometimes.)

"Woke at 9 AM, went back to sleep and dreamed. Woke again at 11:30 AM. I decided to go back to sleep. Laid there concentrating on the space behind my closed eyes. I had to go to the bathroom, and John had left the door of our room open. I could hear my roommates downstairs. Saw pictures in my third eye; a couple of different views of my face, some landscapes, and some unidentifiable figurines. Then my roommate Drew came up the steps and he threw a crumpled up bag at me.

"You ***hole, get outta here!" I said to him. He said, "No way, man, I'm gonna bug you."

He came over by my bed and I reached out to strike at him. When I swung my arm forward, it was then that I felt like I was pulling out of my body. Drew was trying to bug me and it dawned on me that I was in trance. I was curious because there was no break in my consciousness at all. I then faded back into my body. I tried to go back to the projection. A rift formed in the space behind my eyes, and in this rift, a blurry figure was trying to grab at me. Lost this lockmold. Woke up completely. Heard Drew downstairs playing his guitar."

12>

(This is a nice description of some kinesthetic sensations.)

" Laid there in bed a while paying attention to my physiology as I was falling back asleep. Felt streams of warmth shooting through my body and vibrations through

my arms, legs and torso. I saw a picture form in my third eye, it was unrecognizable. Must have broke consciousness because the next I knew I was in the state where I felt I could dissociate. Laid there struggling to get out. I wiggled out. I ran to the front window here in the attic..."

13>

(Here's an example of stepping into a hypnogogic image, also note what I say about being startled and keeping myself relaxed.)

" I woke from sleep. Had fleeting glimpses of my dream memories then they were gone. Laid observing my physiology. I had an aspirin the night before and now I felt it burning in my stomach. I felt better than I did before I fell asleep. I shut my eyes and could see into (through?) my third eye. As is common for me, whenever a picture would form I would feel a tightening in my heart, which would always cause the image to fade from my third eye. I tried to still this and relax and just calmly watch the pictures form in my third eye. A few scenes formed and faded but I don't recall what they were. Finally I managed to coordinate my heart and third eye chakras. The scene of a street formed vividly in front of my closed eyes. There was a river off to my left, 50-100 yards from the road. On the left seemed to be a construction site. There were buildings on my right. I was trying to observe details and I felt my foot step forward! Surprised the hell out of me! Next thing I knew, I was walking along the street...."

14>

(Another example of leaving.)

"Woke around 1:00 AM. Within about 1 hour, I felt a throb at the back of my head. Wondered if it had anything to do with my pineal gland. Tried to fall back to sleep but I was too uncomfortable from the pain. Was up for a little while, took some aspirin and went back to bed.

I lay in bed waiting for the aspirin to hit me. Soon I could see the swirling motion moving through the darkness behind my closed eyes. I thought of the motion as "my friend". I tried to sense if there was any connection between the throbbing and the motion. Next I knew, the aspirin took effect and the throb was numbed away. I continued to watch in my third eye. I started to be able to see the meme bacteria and the imagery was surprisingly clear. However, whenever I achieved a good clear focus, I would become too excited and the images would fade. Laid thinking about some material I had read earlier about microtubule transport and diffusion c-AMP networks in the brain and what this might have to do with the meme bacteria that I could see.

I must have drifted off cause the next thing I realized, I could leave my body. But I was lying in a bed in a totally unfamiliar room. I flew out through the wall and was in an unfamiliar suburb..."

15>

(Here's a nice description of watching the hypnogogic images, also in this experience I appear on the Etheric plane.)

"Laid down to project. Was very relaxed. Laid watching images form in my third eye (the so-called hypnogogic images). I watched this process carefully. At first the images could be seen to appear in the grainy milieu behind my closed eyes. They would be the graininess in the form suggestive of a face. They did not have color to them. Soon though I would be observing an image in full color, but it would only last an instant. The instant I would be aware of a vivid and distinct image, my heart chakra would tense and the image would disappear. Also, I'd feel myself "slip" closer to being wide awake when I'd lose an image. Soon the images were forming rapidly and in color. They were very subtle.

Once I became relaxed enough that I would not "tense" the pictures away, I noticed that the images would blend imperceptibly with my visual memory. That is, one instant I would be observing a hypnogogic image, the next instant I was remembering the image. At times this would occur so quickly that I almost couldn't tell if I was just conjuring up an image in my imagination. Finally, one particular image clicked in and I felt very stable. I thought to myself, "This is it. Leave now."

I looked around and saw I was lying on a bed in a room that looked like my bedroom (at my Dad's house, which is where I am at right now), except there was no furniture in this room. I could hear "haunted house" sounds: wind blowing, shrieking and clanking and howling sounds. They were not loud but they were audible. I tried to levitate but I could not. I could feel my body and it was paralyzed. I realized that I was on the Etheric plane. I could hear my step mother talking very clearly in the next room. I tried to get up. It was very difficult to move but I pulled myself up. I pulled my covers off of me and tried to stand up. I felt very heavy and knew I was in my Etheric (ectoplasm) body...."

16>

"Went to take a nap after classes. Been frustrated lately cause I haven't traveled in about a month. Was determined to do it now. Laid in bed trying to focus, but my mind kept wandering. Finally I made a strong determined effort. A couple hypnogogic images came and went. One of them was sexual and it caused me to wake. I began to concentrate on the lights behind my closed eyes (entopic light) and the "whooshing" sounds in my ear (the blood circulating in the ear). Some time passed, yet I kept concentrating. Finally it hit. I felt the "headrush" feeling, but at that moment its significance escaped me. But I tried to jump out anyway. It worked! I was in my bedroom, lockmold blinking on and off badly...."

17>

(Here's an example of a passive exit, and apparently here I "fell" into my hypnogogic images! Note too that this entry occurred in the middle of a projection, but again, the same thing could easily happen when you first try to leave. Note too how I am trying to remember my projection while it is occurring.)

"Laid trying to remember all that has been recorded to this point before I attempted to leave again. Soon I felt as if I was reclined backwards, with my feet up about 2 feet up in the air, though I was still stretched out on my bed. I stared into the "stars" (ideoretinal light) behind my closed eyes and I could see green and purple shapes of the meme bacteria moving in a way that looked like unicellular creatures moving under a microscope (like the motion one sees when looking at pond water under a microscope). I could see this quite clearly. I mentally kept tipping myself steeper backwards. Then suddenly I slid backwards right into the midst of the meme bacteria! This made me scared. But I could see helical tubes of green and purple moving and spiraling around me. I knew that I must be in my brain somewhere. I can't remember now (as I'm recording this) exactly what I saw. However I had continued to fall backwards, and it was as if I slid backwards through the green and purple spirals. When I stopped falling backwards, I had landed in a rather large room that seemed familiar to me, though I couldn't place why..."

18>

(Here I apparently feel lighter instead of heavy as my trance gets deeper. See, this is why you write the stuff down! I never would have remembered this!)

"Woke about 7:00 AM. Went and pissed and came back to bed intent upon leaving. Laid down feeling "stiff-tired". As I relaxed and concentrated I felt myself get lighter and lighter. Saw the "stars" ("ideoretinal light") transform into a balloon-like cocoon surrounding me. I turned around and pushed backwards through it. I think I appeared in a forest, but I can't remember now for sure. I recall walking along a muddy dirt road...."

19>

(The following rather long entry was written about 1 year after I started astral projecting. You will note many of the familiar themes I have described above, but also note my more detailed description of them. As these elements became more familiar to me, I would take more time to study them carefully.)

"The most exciting thing today was my hypnogogic imagery I saw before I left my body. I am most definitely getting better at allowing third eye images to form. I don't seem to need to go into as deep a trance as I used to before the imagery starts. Today I was only very relaxed, not even in trance yet, and the first image formed. It lasted in full proportions for maybe 5 seconds then weakened a bit and lingered for maybe another 20 seconds. After the image weakened a bit, I could actually open my eyes and still see the hypnogogic image at the same time! The heart chakra jerk that usually

accompanies my recognition of a hypnogogic image was weaker today. When I felt it, it did not cause the image to fade. I'm beginning to suspect that the perceiving of these hypnogogic images is related to brain wave states (i.e. EEG patterns), because there is a very distinct change in the "carrier wave" of my consciousness before these images begin to arise.

What was the image? (picture in notebook) It was a circle that was divided up like a pie and it looked to have rivets in it. I wondered if it was some type of image of one of my chakras. It had a yellowish white cast to it. In the "stronger image" the upper left quadrant of the circle seemed to be open revealing a view of a cloudy blue sky. There were also little neon green springs that flitted in and out of my vision. When the image became "weaker" the region showing the sky disappeared, it closed up, and all I could see was an image of the circle, though it seemed more transparent, the colors were more pale.

After the image deteriorated, I could see lots of "neon motion" in the darkness behind my closed eyes superimposed over the imagery of the drifting entopic light. I desired to leave. Soon, the Kundalini vibrations started up and took over my body. These felt like chills whipping gently up and down my whole body. I lay there feeling this for some time. At some point I attempted to leave, to push up and out, and it worked.

I was in my bedroom and it looked extremely physical - so much so that I wasn't even sure if I had left or if I had woken up. But when I tried to move, my motion was sluggish and lethargic and the farther I moved from my bed the more difficult it was to continue, and I knew then that I was in my Etheric body. Couldn't pass through the ceiling, wall or behind bookshelf. Then I "snapped" back into my physical body.

Lay there drifting off in my thoughts. Finally, I refocused on leaving again. My consciousness seems to have broken and next thing I knew, I was flying in the void. Flew for a distance then tried the hands trick. It took some time for me to focus myself in, but it worked well this time. As soon as I could see/feel my body, my bedroom had materialized around me as well. My room appeared different though now...."

END OF JOURNAL ENTRIES

Well, I hope you didn't mind all those entries. The reason I put so many in these notes is because getting out of your body is obviously the most crucial part of this whole experience! I wanted to illustrate to you just how variable this is and how many different ways it can manifest. And also, as you can see from the above entries, leaving your body is by no means a cut and dry thing. Sometimes I was not sure if I was still awake or if I was in trance yet. Of course, eventually I'd figure it out, but it's not always obvious. Also, you can see that there is no regular pattern to what happens as you go deeper into trance. Sometimes you may see hypnogogic images, other times you may fall into them! Sometimes you might not even see them.

In spite of all this complexity, I really hope I have at least given you some idea of what it is like to go into trance and what it is like to leave your body.

E. Other Techniques For Getting Out Of Body

Before I start the topic of what it is actually like in a projection, I want to briefly mention some other methods that people use to get into the projection state. I have saved these techniques for last because I don't use them and don't really know too much about them.

I suspect that if you want more information about the following techniques you can go inquire on the message boards here in the CompuServe New Age forum. There are many people here in the forum who know more about these techniques than I do. As well, there are references provided in the bibliography that specify in much more detail than I do here how to achieve projections using these other methods (see especially Rogo's "Leaving The Body"). The techniques I'd like to mention now are: 1. visualization methods, and 2. using electronic devices such as tapes and other gadgets and using drugs.

1. Visualization Methods

The basic idea of visualization methods for projecting entails creating an image in your mind's eye and then stepping into this image. Above, in my discussion about the trance method, I went to great effort to make clear that hypnogogic images are different than images created in your visual imagination (i.e. your mind's eye). What we now want to discuss are the images you create in your visual imagination, and we are NOT discussing hypnogogic images.

Like the trance method, visualization methods require concentration. You create an image in your mind's eye and you must concentrate on this image, which means you must hold this image uninterrupted in your mind's eye. Such a thing is not easy to do. If you can hold on to one thought for longer than 5 seconds you are doing really good. This type of concentration is also a basic technique of yoga meditation. In yoga, one may concentrate on a mandala or a chant as a meditation exercise. Concentrating on a mandala is a visualization exercise.

So, to achieve a projection through visualization, one must first be very good at concentrating on visual images. If you are not good at this, it will require much preliminary practice before you ever see your first projection. You will have to practice daily on holding an image uninterrupted in your mind's eye. It is only when you can hold an image in your mind's eye for an extended period of time - perhaps 15 to 30 minutes - that you will then be able to enter into this image.

Next, what does it mean to "enter an image in your imagination"?

Now, since I do not use this method, I can only go by what I have read. From these sources, it appears that the act of stepping into a visual image is similar to pushing out of your body as is done in the trance method. Frankly, I can't imagine that this is very easy to do. Stepping into an image in your mind's eye is a different process than stepping into a hypnogogic image or pushing out of your body while in trance. I suspect that very few people find it easy to *literally* step into their thoughts. Sure, we all day-dream to some extent or another, but how

many of us ***physically feel ourselves*** in the day-dream? I know I do not. When I day-dream, I am fully aware that I am making up a story in my mind, and my kinesthetic sensations are firmly fixed here in the physical world. Yet, it seems to me that this is what visualization methods entail; stepping into a day-dream.

I suspect that the ability to literally step into your thoughts must be a talent possessed by a small fraction of the human population. For most of us, there is a very rigid distinction between our perception of ourselves in the physical world and in our thoughts. For example, when we are sitting in a classroom day-dreaming, we are still (painfully? <g>) aware of the fact that we are sitting in the classroom, and that we are NOT inside our day-dream. For some people however, this must not be the case. Perhaps for a small percentage of people, they have the ability to literally feel themselves inside of their day-dreams! And it seems to me that this is the essential gist of the visualization methods for achieving astral projection; in effect, you create a daydream, and you shift your awareness from the physical plane into this day-dream. That is to say, you shift your kinesthetic sensations from your physical environment to the made-up environment in your imagination. Having never done this, I obviously don't know what it is like to step into a day-dream.

If the idea of becoming lucid in a dream seems like an "artificial" way to astral project (which, again, it is NOT), then it seems to me that stepping into a day-dream, or an image you have concocted in your imagination is even more artificial. By "artificial" I mean lacking spontaneity. The trance method is by far the most spontaneous method of astral projecting in that you are creating nothing in your imagination when you do the techniques I outlined above. Everything is spontaneous in the trance state: the hypnogogic images, the sensations you feel, and where you eventually appear once you leave your body. The dream method is less spontaneous in that you never directly perceive your consciousness dissociating from your physical body. Yet, there is no question that the content of your dreams is highly spontaneous and unpredictable. In the case of visualization methods, it appears that one perceives themselves entering into the visualization, but, you are then in an environment created by your own imagination, which is about the most predictable thing there is.

However, the one book I have read that really advocates the visualization method (see Brennan, "Astral Doorways") refers to these visualized (i.e. imagined) environments as "astral doorways". So, I suspect that what this means is that the place you have visualized in your imagination, which you want to be standing within, simply gets you to the astral plane. Once you are there, you can then leave this artificial place of your own creation and go explore the planes. This is what Brennan and others who advocate visualization describe.

That's about all I have to say about visualization methods. My intention here is not to teach you visualization methods but to simply expose you to the fact that this method exists. The idea of a visualization method is that you make up an image in your mind's eye, and then you step into this image as a means of getting to the astral plane. As I said, there is nothing easy about this technique. Not only do you have to have the ability to concentrate on one thought for long periods of time (15 minutes is an eternity when you are holding one thought in your mind), but you as well have to have the rare ability to be able to step into your thoughts. The ability to step into your thoughts is apparently the ability to transfer, or displace, your kinesthetic sensations from

your physical environment to the image in your mind. Again, I cannot do this, so I am obviously in no position to tell you how to do it. Like I said, I suspect that a few rare individuals can naturally do this, but for most of us, cultivating this ability would take a LOT of work. And given how easy the trance method I described above is, and how effective it is for getting you to the astral plane, I don't think you need to waste time learning how to do visualization exercises. However, if you are into ritual magic, yoga and meditation, then visualization exercises are right up your alley and you may find this a suitable method for getting to the astral plane.

2. **Drugs, Tapes And Other Devices**

Finally, I want to address methods that rely on some kind of external gadget to help you get to the astral plane. Such gadgets could be listening to tapes, wearing goggles, and possibly even taking drugs. In general, all of these gadgets are designed to put you into a state of mind that will make it easy for you to leave your body.

Let me discuss drugs first. In my experiences, common street drugs do NOT help you achieve astral projection. Street drugs such as alcohol, marijuana, LSD, and cocaine create conditions inside your body that will PREVENT you from astral projecting. This at least has been my personal experience. Perhaps there are people who have been able to project by using street drugs but I do not know any of them. And in all of the books I have read about astral projection, not one of them mentions using drugs as a means to achieve OOBES. So, based on what I have read and based on my own personal experience, street drugs CANNOT help you achieve an astral projection. Again, street drugs PREVENT you from astral projecting.

Now, I was careful in the previous paragraph to discuss only street drugs. There are medications that doctors use that seem to put you in a state that induces OOBES. Most notably, there is a drug called ketamine (sometimes called "K" or "vitamin K" on the streets) which can put you in an OOBES.

Doctors **used to** use ketamine as an anesthetic, mainly on children getting their tonsils out and on pregnant women in labor. Doctors call Ketamine a "dissociative anesthetic" because the drug doesn't simply put you to sleep as an anesthetic is supposed to do, but it causes your consciousness to separate from your body. Not only this, but patients given ketamine often reported very unpleasant experiences such as nightmares or weird visions. Because of this, doctors do not use ketamine anymore as an anesthetic, at least here in the United States. In Europe, doctors still use ketamine.

Aside from its legitimate usage as an anesthetic, because of the fact that Ketamine produces such weird psychological effects, its use as a street drug has become popular. You will find in underground literature, or in magazines such as "High Times" descriptions of people using Ketamine as a mind altering substance. The descriptions that people give are actually quite intriguing and fascinating. On the basis of what is known medically about Ketamine, I suspect that Ketamine produces a state similar to hypnagogia, and can even induce OOBES, and this is the basis for the amazing reports of "K" that you will hear on the streets.

So, should you try to use Ketamine to achieve OOBES? Frankly, I DO NOT ADVOCATE THE USE OF KETAMINE FOR ACHIEVING OOBES. The reason for this is

two-fold. First, you DON'T need a drug to achieve OOBES. The trance method I describe above is easy enough and effective enough. In light of this, why waste time with a drug? Furthermore, you have to INJECT Ketamine, there is no pill form. The idea of sticking a needle in one's arm is not very pleasing. Second, I once actually tried Ketamine, and you know what? It IS an anesthetic! All I wanted to do was go to sleep! Nothing happened to me at all. I got no weird psychological effects - nothing. It was a completely disappointing experience. So, besides the fact that you have to stick a needle in your arm to do Ketamine, it doesn't seem to be as much of a panacea as its advocates make it out to be. My recommendation: stay away from ALL drugs when trying to astral project. DRUGS WILL NOT HELP YOU ASTRAL PROJECT.

Now, what about things like tapes or other electronic gadgets that are supposed to help you astral project? Again, there are many New Age forum members interested in this topic. You can get more information on the message boards in the New Age forums than I can give you here. Essentially though, the idea behind these gadgets, from tapes to whatever, is that they manipulate or affect your brain waves in such a way as to help you achieve an astral projection. Do they work? I'm sure they do for some people. There are probably people for whom the dream and trance methods, or any other non-gadget methods simply do not work. These kind of people can benefit from the use of electronic gadgets to help them achieve an OOBES.

Tapes that help you astral project are very common. One source of such tapes is the Monroe Institute in Faber, Virginia. Robert Monroe is a well known astral projector (his books are listed in the bibliography). Monroe has since gone into the business of offering tapes and retreats, not so much for learning how to astral project, but for learning how to become a more integrated person. He does claim that some of his tapes can help "facilitate" OOBES. He claims to have discovered a method, which he has patented, called the "Hemi Sync" method. The hemi sync method entails putting different frequency sound waves in each ear, which then are supposed to result in making a standing wave in your brain that supposedly makes it easier to astral project.

Frankly, I don't know if this is what his hemi sync method really does. The actual physiology of brain waves is much more complex than Monroe's simplistic explanation of hemi sync. But still, whether his explanation of his hemi sync method is believable or not, the bottom line is: do his tapes work?

I have actually tried one of Monroe's tapes. What is on the tape is some rather low budget New Age music with sounds like ocean waves underneath the music. Apparently, the ocean wave-like sounds are the hemi sync frequencies. Now, what is very interesting is that I actually did have a projection after listening to the tape! However, I want to stress, I used his tape ONE TIME ONLY. I do not know if his tape caused me to project or not. I project all the time without using tapes, so just because I projected after listening to Monroe's tape does not mean the tape caused my projection.

Basically, I have not tested Monroe's product well enough to say definitely that it does or does not work. Should you go buy one of Monroe's tapes and test it for yourself? I only recommend doing this if you have tried the dream and trance methods but have gotten NO RESULT WHATSOEVER. I don't think you need to go using tapes unless you know for sure that non-gadget methods will not work for you. As I said, I've had way over 100 OOBES and I NEVER use tapes or other gadgets. I DO NOT THINK THAT MOST PEOPLE NEED

GADGETS TO ASTRAL PROJECT. People have been astral projecting just fine for centuries without the use of tapes or other electronic gadgets. And the methods that have been developed based on dreams, trance and visualization work very well. I recommend strongly that you try the traditional methods of astral projecting before you go and buy tapes or other gadgets that are supposed to help you astral project.

Now, are there other kinds of electronic gadgets that are supposed to help you astral project? I've heard talk here in the New Age forum about "dream goggles". I don't know what these are or what they are supposed to do. You might want to ask around on the message board if you are interested in anything like this.

In some respects it is good that people are experimenting with electronic means to achieve altered states of consciousness. However, virtual reality is nothing compared to a REAL astral projection. I personally am not into any of these electronic ways of achieving altered states. I prefer more "natural" methods like trance or dream methods. In the end, your choice of trying these electronic methods is completely up to you. If you want to spend money on these gadgets or tapes, that is your business. However, I want to make it perfectly clear that you have built right into you all the tools you **need** to astral project. Again, astral projection is a natural ability just like dreaming. You can do it without recourse to electronic devices of any kind.

So that's it. This now ends my presentation of methods used for astral projection. Again, check out the bibliography for information on books that describe other methods besides the dream and trance methods I have emphasized here.

III. IN THE OOBEE REALM

We have discussed the theory of astral projection. We have discussed methods and techniques for achieving this altered state of consciousness. Now we are going to discuss what it is like in the realm where the OOBEE occurs. To some extent we have touched on the nature of the OOBEE realm throughout these notes. We have, for example discussed the occult notions of the planes and the subplanes. I have also presented some of my astral projection journal entries and these give an idea of what it is actually like in the OOBEE realm.

What we will do in this section is go into much more depth about the various aspects of actually being in the OOBEE state.

My description of this state will encompass two broad angles.

On one hand I will take a kind of "travel brochure" approach to describing the places and inhabitants one encounters during an OOBEE. This is the approach one will find in many books about the astral plane (for example, see Leadbeater's "The Astral Plane" listed in the bibliography). Such a "travel brochure" approach describes the astral plane much as if it's a foreign land filled with exotic sights, scenes and inhabitants. On the other hand, I also want to try to convey some sense of what it is **really** like when you are out of your body. One of the problems with the "travel brochure" approach to describing the OOBEE realm is that it creates the misleading impression that you have simply just "gone somewhere". That is, "travel brochure" type descriptions of the astral plane make it sound like you just get in your car and drive there and see

the sights, as if it's Disneyland or something. However, when you are out of body, it is NOT like getting in your car and driving somewhere new and seeing the sights. You are in a completely different state of consciousness - you are no longer in the physical world - and this creates a million subtle nuances in your awareness that make it much, much different than how your awareness operates while you are here in the physical plane. What I would like to do then is try to convey some of these differences in how your consciousness works when you are in the OOB realm. So, overall, I will describe the OOB realm BOTH as a place you go to AND as a state of consciousness very different than (but related to) your normal consciousness.

A. Describing OOBs with words

Before I get too deep in describing the OOB realm, something has to be said about the limitations of using words to describe experiences in the OOB realm. In general, our language is very poor at describing astral plane experiences. This is no surprise given that we use language overwhelmingly to describe life here in the physical plane. However, experience is much different in the OOB state. There are many things that can occur in the OOB state that our language has no words to describe. Obviously then, this creates quite a problem when we want to write about or speak about our astral projection experiences! So what are we to do?

First thing to do is realize that the problems with trying to describe OOBs in words is very similar to the problems we have describing our dreams in words. Very often strange things happen to us in our dreams and we have a very hard time describing them.

For example, we have all had the experience in a dream of being, say, in a house and walking from one part of the house to another but all of a sudden finding ourselves in the supermarket or some such thing! We went to walk into the kitchen, but we find ourselves somewhere completely different and no longer in the house! This has happened to me a lot in my dreams and all of you can probably recall such things happening in your own dreams. The thing is, what do you call it when this happens? It's happened to all of us in a dream, but we have no word for it! Shall we say, "I **blipped** from the house to the supermarket"? Or, "I disappeared from the house but suddenly appeared in the supermarket"? Robert Monroe would say he "skipped" from the house to the supermarket.

Now, the point is, this is something that has happened to all of us, yet we have no word to describe it. And I picked this particular example of "blipping" because you will find yourself "blipping" quite a bit when you are in the OOB realm. But, what do we call this? How do we describe it?

Basically, we are left with a real problem. Our language has no **consensus** terms to describe such experiences. Thus, our only solution is to make up a word to describe the experience. This is why I use terms like "lockmold", "void" or "blinking on and off" in my journal, because I am making up words to describe experiences for which our language has no word, and even more importantly, for which there is no counterpart in our physical experience.

What all this means is that you really have to be careful when reading about people's experiences in the OOB realm. If you try to interpret these experiences in terms of physical experience or in terms of our normal everyday language, you will get a very INACCURATE

picture of what is going on. You also have to be a careful reader when reading of the OOB realm. You have to really use your imagination and attempt to understand what strange words like "ring" or "lockmold" could mean, and why the author is describing his/her experience in that fashion. Finally, you have to be open to the fact that anything is possible in the OOB realm. So many strange things can occur there that are completely different than what we know here in physical life, that you just have to keep a very open mind.

B. The State Of Your Mind In The OOB State

So, not only does our language create a barrier to understanding the nature of the OOB realm, but we are faced with a second major obstacle in understanding the OOB state. As I said above, during an OOB YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT IS IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD. Remember, I have defined OOBs/astral projections/lucid dreams as a state in which you take your waking personality into the dream world. However, in actual fact, during any OOB you never take your waking self 100% into the dream world. Instead you take some PORTION of it into the dream world. In effect, when you project you are MIXING YOUR WAKING PERSONALITY WITH YOUR DREAM PERSONALITY. And this is why your consciousness is not exactly the same as it is when you are awake here in this world. Not only are you in a realm that is completely foreign to you, but you are never wholly you over there. Believe me, this is very true, and it creates very subtle changes in your reactions, thoughts and emotional responses to what you experience in the OOB realm and how you behave there.

This is all I'm going to say about your state of mind during an OOB for now. As I go more into specific things below, we will have occasion to see the subtle differences in awareness that occur during an OOB. Right now I am only drawing your attention to this fact. After I go into more detail about other aspects of the OOB realm, we will at the very end of these notes come back to this topic. For after all, aside from actually learning how to get there, the actual state of your consciousness during an OOB is the most important thing there is - for this is the meat and potatoes of it all: you are experiencing a completely different state of consciousness! Think about it.

C. The OOB World: Objective or Subjective?

Now, we have one last consideration before I start describing what happens during an OOB. I've already stated that during an OOB your personality is "outside" of you and that subjective things can be completely real and objective in the OOB realm. What this means is we are left with a weird problem when trying to understand experiences in the OOB realm. Basically, is it real or is it merely subjective fantasy? Well, we could debate whether OOBs are objective or subjective experiences till we are blue in the face. It doesn't matter if, in some abstract sense, the OOB realm is objective or subjective. What matters is that when you astral project, it WILL BE COMPLETELY REAL TO YOU. Like I said, it will be YOU, and you will be SOMEWHERE, doing SOMETHING. Whether it's all occurring in your imagination or not is beside the point.

However, what is critically important for you to keep in mind when you astral project is that YOU CANNOT ASSUME THAT WHAT YOU EXPERIENCE IS OBJECTIVE AND NEITHER CAN YOU ASSUME IT IS PURELY SUBJECTIVE. Whatever the nature of the OOB experience, you will be somewhere where the subjective can become objective and the objective can become subjective.

D. The Dweller At The Threshold

The above discussion leads me now to share with you information that was very important to me when I first started projecting. I had a book by an author whose name I think was Sepherial. I can't even remember anymore, it's been so long since I've seen this book, which I gave to a friend years ago. At any rate, this book was about how to become an occultist. The first important thing Sepherial said you have to do to become a worthwhile occultist is to overcome fear. He said that you overcome fear by studying it. As you learn what causes you to fear things, you can overcome these fears. He even pointed out that if you carefully observe yourself when you get afraid, you will notice that fear begins as a kind of tightening in your chest by your heart. The tightening begins at your heart and then spreads from there down to your gut and into your arms and legs. Frankly, once I started watching myself get afraid, I was really surprised to see that he was correct.

Sepherial went on to explain how it's really important to realize that fear is something we create in our own minds and that if we are to get involved in occult things, we must learn NOT to fear things anymore. You can replace fear with understanding. When you understand something, you no longer need to fear it. If it is truly a dangerous thing, but you understand it, you will not fear it, you will avoid and respect it. And there are other things we fear that, in reality, are not dangerous things. These are the worst kinds of fear for an occultist to have. These are fears you have created in your own mind, for whatever reasons. These fears are like weeds that grow in the garden of your mind, and you should eliminate these.

Well, this was my first lesson in occultism. I read Sepherial's book at about the same time I started astral projecting. I took Sepherial's advice to heart, and it was a good thing too because my first few times astral projecting were lessons in overcoming fear.

There are two types of fear I have experienced astral projecting. It is possible that you may experience these types of fears too, so I will explain them for you.

The first type of fear is completely harmless. My very first astral projections occurred spontaneously about 5 years before I even realized they were astral projections. At the time, I thought they were merely strange dreams. In retrospect, they were definitely astral projections. What had happened is that I had laid down to nap. Next thing I knew I was spinning around the ceiling of my bedroom! I was amazed. I didn't have the slightest idea what was happening to me, and what was even weirder was that I was completely terrified. I was scared to death. But it was a very strange sensation; I was afraid, but I had no reason to be afraid, in spite of the fact that I was mysteriously spinning around on my ceiling! Mostly I was extremely curious as to what was happening to me and my experience turned into a contest between my fear and my curiosity. Finally, after about 30 seconds of this, my fear won, and the next thing I knew I was sitting awake

in bed. I was not afraid at all when I woke but I was just very curious. My second projection was identical to this and happened around the same time the first one did (I was about 15 years old when this occurred). I promptly forgot these experiences till many years later.

I was 22 years old when I learned about astral projecting. Eventually it occurred to me that maybe those experiences I had years before were astral projections. If this was the case, that I had actually astral projected before, then this meant I could probably do it again. And it was then that I consciously started to astral project. When I first started projecting, I used the trance method I described above. Actually, I made up this method as I went along. Originally, I would lie in bed and simply tell myself I was going to astral project as I drifted off to sleep at night. After a number of attempts at this, it worked! I became conscious of myself AFTER I had fallen asleep! And, just like years before, I felt that same feeling of terror, and, as before, there was absolutely no reason for this feeling. I got this same feeling of fear on my next two attempts as well, but on my third attempt, it was gone, and it has never returned.

I don't know what this feeling of fear was. As I said, it was just there on my first few attempts, then it went away. I have a friend who is also a competent astral projector and he said a similar thing happened to him. I have always suspected that this feeling of fear had something to do with separating my consciousness from my body, as if it was a purely instinctive response of my awareness to operating without using my physical body. But once I got used to the sensation of being out-of-body, the fear response just went away. Again, I think this may be some type of PURELY HARMLESS instinct that occurs solely because of dissociating your awareness from its body.

It's important to point out that you may never experience this type of a fear response. In the time I have been on CompuServe, I have spoken with a number of very good astral projectors and they have never reported this response. Still, I have had it and so has my friend, so I am describing it here so that if it happens to you, you will know what is going on. If, the first time you leave your body, you feel complete terror for no reason at all, then you are having this reaction. Don't let it bother you because it will go away after your first few times out-of-body.

OK, now for the second type of fear that I have had to deal with in my astral projections. Very early in my projection experiences I went through something I call my "Darkside Episodes". These were absolutely terrifying experiences for me too, but unlike those described above, there WAS a reason for my fear and terror.

Here are excerpts from my DarkSide experiences:

1>

"All I can remember now is that somehow I left my body, or became lucid in the dream state, whichever you prefer...

(I went though a number of experiences, then...)

...Somehow that I can't now recall, I was outside my body again.

This time I was standing in my bedroom. I was surprised because it seemed to be daytime outside, but I knew it was nighttime and that I was actually sleeping on my bed. I noticed that where my west wall normally was that there was another room

beyond it, like the wall had disappeared and there was this room there instead. I floated into the room and could look into my bedroom. I noticed that I had hands and arms and legs and that I was floating a foot or so off the ground. I was moving my body around just marveling in the sensation of my lucidity. I began to feel elated. I started to call out and experienced the same thing that happened the other night. I could hear my voice in my mind and it sounded perfectly normal, but when I actually tried to talk, it came out in slow motion.

I was really feeling great and had been playing with these things for a few moments when all of a sudden I began to feel trepid and a little paranoid. It felt like I was being watched. I looked up into my room and saw a tall dark figure standing in my window. My windows were open as if they were doors and this figure was standing there on the windowsill looking at me. I didn't know what to think at first. The figure was of a male, tall and skinny, and pitch black, more like a silhouette than anything else. I'd have thought it was a shadow except it had these vivid evil looking completely red eyes. It didn't have pupils or anything, just these evil looking eye slits that were totally red. At first I thought it couldn't see me, but as if in response to my thought, it turned and stared directly at me. Then I became afraid. I didn't know what I should do. It slowly seemed to move towards me, and I made my way back to my bed, thinking that I should jump back into my body and wake up. I hovered over to my bed and this thing was slowly coming at me.

Then I remembered something from one of the first occult books that I had ever read [This is the Sepherial book I'm referring to here]. In this book the author gave a magic phrase for the student to say to protect himself from evil forces. The author claimed that it was a very potent spell from the times of ancient Atlantis. The spell was in some unknown language and I didn't know what it meant, but at the time I had memorized it [though I no longer remember it], and it seemed like now was as good a time as any to use it!

So I repeated the spell in my mind and the wildest things happened. I was surprised as ***** that it worked! At least it did something, for now I was laying half way out of my body, the dark figure had disappeared, and now there was this, what seemed to me to be like a very fake looking mannequin up over me. It had the face of a cartoon alligator and I was biting its arm, but it looked just like a mannequin and wasn't doing anything. It had a stupid, goofy look on its face.

But I was panicking, attacking its arm and trying like hell to wake myself up. I kept trying to shake myself, thinking that if I could move my body then I'd wake up. The strangest thing happened. As I shook myself, I could feel myself "sink" into my physical body, and weird as this sounds I could see two distinct visual fields at once. They didn't overlap though, one was on top of the other, as if my visual field were cut in two. The top one was my visual field in my projection of my day lit bedroom, and the bottom field was my dark bedroom at night. There was even a definite line of demarcation between the two view fields. My vision was literally split in half! It was the absolutely strangest sensation! And as I struggled to shake myself, I could feel

myself pull down to the lower view of my bedroom, and the top view seemed to go up and out of my visual field. But then I would relax momentarily and I would start to rise up, just like when one is under water and starts to float toward the surface, and I was being pulled back up into the top scene. Then I would begin to struggle and shake myself again, and pull back down. This happened about four times; I would think that I was out of the top view and begin to relax and quit shaking and rocking myself, and the moment I would stop, I would feel myself being pulled back into the top visual field. I was scared as hell and thought I was trapped. Finally though, I shook and shook and shook myself and I actually woke up.

I was lying still on my bed. For all the shaking and moving I was doing, I thought when I awoke that my body would be moving around as much. But it wasn't; it was very still. I laid there scared as hell. I had the strangest paranoia that at any moment something evil was going to jump out of my walls and stab me to death, the same feeling I felt before. I didn't know what had just happened to me. Who the hell was that dark figure? For some reason it really spooked me bad."

(END OF ENTRY)

Well, that was my Darkside experience. I was very scared after that. I was afraid to project even. Was that thing going to always come and haunt me in my projections? What was it?

Again, I turned to my friend who could also astral project.

We discussed my experience. After thinking about it for a week or so, I came to the conclusion that the Darkside was me! I figured that maybe what was happening is that somehow, everything that was bad about me appeared OUTSIDE OF ME in my projections. Maybe this thing was just all my own badness embodied as a being coming to haunt me in the astral projection state. Whether this is true or not, this is what I decided to believe. And since it was me, then I really didn't have to fear it, because that would mean I was afraid of myself! So I decided that what I should do is become more aware of all my badness and quit being that way, then, maybe this thing would go away. And I figured that if I met this Darkside in my projections again, then I would confront it instead of being afraid of it. I would stand up to it, and battle it if I had to.

So, that's what I decided. Here's what happened the next time I projected:

2>

"I know I went to sleep with the intent to project. Since my "darkside" episode, I was leery to project again, but now I felt that I understood what this being was and I felt confident to face it if I needed to.

(I went though some other adventures, then...)

I was back in my bedroom again, still lucid in the projection state. I noticed that it was daytime outside, though I also knew I was sleeping in my bed and it was really night on the physical plane. But then I noticed that there was a doorway in my bedroom

wall, one that was not there physically. So I went through the door and began to explore.

The doorway lead into a castle and I was very surprised by this. I remember thinking to myself that rooms have all these hidden directions in them in the astral plane. It was a huge and elegantly decorated place and the decor looked fairly modern. I wandered about and eventually came to a room that had a window that was overlooking a long shingled roof. I climbed through the window and there was a girl outside on the roof. It was sunny outside and I felt very good. Me and the girl talked, but I do not remember what we talked about. I could see around me outside, what looked like a fairly typical, though completely unfamiliar, neighborhood and I was curious to explore it. I went to fly off the roof but my lockmold began to weaken and I blacked out.

I was back in my bedroom again, still lucid in the dream state. The doorway to the castle was still there, but this time there was a pitch black figure sitting crumpled on the floor at the end of my bed. It was the darkside! I became leery and slightly scared, but I remembered my resolve to confront it. Also, this time it looked feeble, sitting in a heap at the foot of my bed, almost like a mannequin. I approached it slowly saying, "What do you want from me? Who are you? Are you me? I love you." My fear was quickly diminishing as I approached it, but it did not move. It seemed dead. I grabbed it by the head and looked directly into its face, all the while telling it "I love you." Its face was utterly lifeless, its eyes dried out gaping holes. I clenched its head and crushed it like a dried out husk, all the while yelling at it, telling it I loved it. I crushed its head completely to dust, knowing that this was only the embodiment of my inability to look squarely at myself. This was all my fear, all my hatred, all my self-hate and I was crushing it to dust and a great joy filled me. I kicked the lifeless heap and felt a triumphant sense run through me. My darkside was dead! I became like a little child and ran through the door into the castle, running about hooting and hollering, excited with the thrill of my victory.

I ran back into my bedroom still elated and making much noise. The crumbled figure was still there and I looked at it with utter disregard. "You're dead," I was yelling at it, and I was jumping up and down yahooing...."

(END OF ENTRY)

So, that's how that situation worked itself out! Reading this now, I almost seem neurotic in this projection. But think of it: how would you feel? You learn to project only to have your new found ability foiled by some pitch black terror? No way!

Given the fact that I have never since encountered this Darkside during a projection, or anything like it, I take it to mean that I was correct. This Darkside I encountered in my earliest projections was all the bad in me coming to haunt me while I was out-of-body. THIS is one among a few experiences I have had that makes me warn you that when you project, things that

are inside you on the physical plane (i.e. subjective things) appear to be outside of you on the astral plane (i.e. objective things).

A year after my darkside experience, I was surprised to read in a Manly Hall book about a thing called "The Dweller on the Threshold". Manly Hall described this "Dweller" as the very first thing waiting on the path to greet the aspiring occultist. He essentially described this Dweller to be exactly what I realized my Darkside to be: all of the badness in one's personality manifested as a being. So, basically, I quite literally met the Dweller on my threshold very shortly after I learned how to leave my body. Manly Hall's book was also a warning to the aspiring occultist that you must overcome fear and ignorance, and seek self-insight and seek the good inside your self and weed out the bad.

Now, the important question of course is: will this happen to you? Will you learn to enter the OOB state only to meet your "Dweller on the Threshold"? Well, again, I have spoken with a number of projectors here on CompuServe who have never had this experience. I do not know if you will encounter such an embodiment of the bad in your personality when you learn to leave your body. We all grow and mature in different ways.

It is very easy to realize that not everybody needs to go through such an experience in the OOB state. But will you? I don't know. You won't know either until you are out there. I share this experience with you just in case it does happen to you. I share this so that you will know what that figure is and how to get rid of it. It is you, and by opening up to what that figure stands for you will get rid of it. Any "Dweller on the Threshold" is that kind of fear I mentioned above, the kind that is not caused by real danger but is created in your imagination, for whatever reason. Look at that fear, try to understand it, and you will have conquered your Dweller on the Threshold.

Again, to drive the point home, there is a very strong element of self-therapy to the OOB state, and the above is a very definite example of this. Like I said, you must appreciate that subjective and objective things turn into each other in the OOB realm.

OK, at this point, we are going to begin the "travel brochure" description of the OOB realm. As I said very early in these notes, once you begin to overcome the influence of your subconscious impinging on your projections, you will indeed discover a vast world of things to see and explore. There are many, many places to go in the planes and many inhabitants you can meet and interact with. I will write this section, by providing an overview of a topic and then giving some examples out of my journal to illustrate whatever I am discussing. As well, I will intersperse helpful hints and suggestions about what to do in particular cases throughout the following discussions.

E. Things You Can Do There That You Can't Do Here

The first thing I want to discuss about being in the OOB realm is what you can do there that you cannot do here in the physical plane. This includes such things as flying, moving through walls and using psychic powers. Throughout the following discussions, though I will not explicitly say "do this or do that", you should keep in mind that anything I describe is fair game for things you too can try once you are out-of-body. Feel free to imitate anything you read about here or in

any astral projection book. This is how I learned; by trying to do what authors described or suggested in their writings, or by copying what they did.

1. **Moving, Flying and the "Wind"**

One thing you can do during an OOBIE is fly. You can also float. Moving around during an OOBIE is much different than moving around in the physical plane. When I first started projecting I just kind of floated around, mostly unaware of any body sensations at all. My first sense of movement in my earliest projections was that I **willed** myself to move by pushing forward. The pushing sensation seemed to originate from my heart region. Here is an excerpt from my journal of how this motion felt:

1>

(Note: this projection occurred before my Darkside projections)

"I woke into the dream state, after laying awake for about two hours convincing myself that I would wake up in my dream. When I became lucid I could see my room in front of me perfectly, as if my eyes were open, but I knew they were not. I thought, "Oh my God, here it is! I'm gonna go up to J.C.'s room." The first thing I noticed was that there was no fear response in me. This made me very happy and I had a feeling very much like "dive head first into the situation", "go for it!", "push on through". The result was that I pushed myself up out of my body.

I was absolutely startled at how clear my perceptions were and at how much my dream bedroom was exactly like my "real" bedroom, right down to the books on my bookshelf! I tried to turn around and look at my body but it wouldn't work. The part of my room where I was lying on my bed defied my attempts to turn in that direction. As I tried to turn around, this direction would turn with me and constantly stay behind me. I found this confusing, but in my enthusiasm gave up the attempt and went on to other things.

I remembered to try to go to John's room as we had planned. I turned and looked at my door. It was closed. I turned away and looked again, and now it was open. Happy and surprised, I pushed through. By now I had become quite aware of my mode of locomotion and it was clear that I was not walking. I seemed to be floating, without legs or feet. Movement seemed to result simply by me thinking of moving. And the source of the force for the motion seemed to emanate from my heart or thoracic region. I even looked for a silver cord but saw none (and never have to this day)...."

(END OF ENTRY)

If you recall from my Darkside journal entries, I was excited because I discovered I had arms, legs, hands and feet during this projection. From then on out I quit using the pushing motion described above.

Of course, you CAN walk during a projection, presuming you feel a body, but floating and flying become the preferred method of getting around. Now, there are some weird things about moving during an OOB that you should be aware of. Whether you are walking or flying sometimes you will find that it is very hard to move.

You have probably actually experienced the sensation I am about to describe in your dreams. Have you ever had a dream where you were running but, no matter how hard you tried, it was very difficult to move your body? Maybe you were being chased by something threatening, but it felt as if you were moving in slow motion. If you have ever felt this kind of sensation during a dream, well, it also occurs during OOBs. You may see somewhere that you want to go in your OOB, but as you move towards it, you will find it harder and harder to move. There is a chance that you may even lose your lockmold and fade out of the projection if you try to force it too far.

There is a classic book on astral projection by Ophiel called "The Art and Practice of Astral Projection" where Ophiel describes this same thing of how it may be hard to move sometimes. Ophiel puts forth the idea that what is happening to cause your movement to become more difficult is that you are transferring your consciousness from one subplane to another. Now, I don't necessarily know if this is what is happening or not, and I really don't know why this happens. My point here is to simply point out that it DOES happen during an OOB. What should you do if this happens? Below I will have some journal entries that address this issue.

Another thing you will encounter in the OOB realm has to do with flying. Simply stated, you cannot always fly whenever you want to. Sometimes you will go to fly and zoom right up into the air. Other times you may only float a couple of feet upwards but stop. Still other times, you may try to fly but nothing at all happens. Again, I don't have the slightest idea why this is the case. Sometimes you can do things that will help you fly when you are having trouble launching yourself, and I will provide some journal entries illustrating what you can do.

Now, presuming you can fly, what should you do? One good suggestion is try to fly into outer space. One author (Greene) describes how he has visited all the planets in the Solar System while out-of-body. Personally, I have only gotten into outer space a couple of times and I will list one of these entries below. Often, I will fly up into the air (if there is air in the OOB realm!) just to get a good look at where I am at. Sometimes, very strange things happen when you fly. Once for example, I flew up into the sky, and the sky itself seemed to turn into a room. I could have flown into this room, but did not. This entry will be listed below.

Finally, there is one last thing to mention about moving during your OOB. This is something I have encountered many, many times. What happens is it seems like a gust of wind will grab you and pull you along. It is almost as if some kind of magnetic force or something has captured you and is pulling you. I will list entries describing this too.

To summarize, here is a list of what you can expect when it comes to locomotion during your OOB:

1. You CAN move without a body, as in the entry I listed above
2. You can walk, fly or float during an OOB. Sometimes you may experience difficulty in moving.
3. You might experience a wind force pulling you along.

Now, here are some journal entries illustrating these things:

2>

(An example of the wind force - this entry is part of my Darkside projection.)

"...I remember becoming lucid and jumping out of my body. I stood in my bedroom wondering what I should do, where I should try to go. I decided I wanted to see if I could make it all the way to Detroit and visit a girlfriend of mine. As soon as I thought this, and made up my mind that I was going to do it, a strong wind came out of nowhere and began to drag me along. I was thoroughly baffled and had no idea what was going on. Yet this wind pulled me along, backwards, and I remember moving very quickly through the walls of the house outside. I passed houses for a short while and then was being pulled through the forest, passing mostly pine trees. I was wondering if this wind was going to take me all the way to Detroit. For a while I relaxed and let it drag me along..."

3>

(Here is an example of finding it hard to move.)

"...Went back into it and jumped out of my body again. I flew outside through the wall and went by my window. I looked in the window and saw myself lying there on the bed! My fan was conspicuously missing from the window, but the me on the bed stared back and waved at the me outside the window. I wasn't too taken aback by this because Greene mentioned that one could see one's other bodies. I flew up onto the roof. It was bumpy, and I had a hard time climbing onto it (like when it becomes difficult running in a dream). I finally managed to pull myself up onto it and I stood there looking out over the backyard. Everything looked quite normal, but then these pillar like things seemed to fade into appearance..."

4>

(Here's an example of flying into outer space. Note too that in this entry I meet a "friendly spirit". Meeting spirits will be discussed ahead.)

"...I was outside again, me and invisible John and the idea occurred to me to fly into outer space. (a suggestion from Greene's book). I raced upwards calling after John to follow. I sped upwards rapidly and it seemed J.C. couldn't keep up. As I rose I looked down hoping to see the terrain unfold below me. What I saw was not what I expected. Below me was a globe but it was not the Earth that we see in pictures. The surface of the globe was covered with strange and complex geometric patterns of various colors and the whole scene had the texture of a cartoon. A vast light seemed to be sweeping across the surface. As I rose higher and higher, I soon lost control and blacked out. I was back on the ground again, by the fort, and decided to try again. I shot upwards and at an incredible speed and soon felt myself "blinking on and off"

again. But much to my surprise, a large hand reached out to me and I grabbed onto it. Suddenly I felt myself being pulled upwards though my vision was fading in and out.

Though I couldn't see who was pulling me, I had the impression that it was some friendly spirit helping me out. In moments I stopped moving up and struggled to regain my vision. I felt like I was very high up and, when I could see it seemed that I was standing on a cloud. I couldn't see well around me but I remember managing to look downward. There only seemed to be clouds below, but my vision was fading in and out badly now. It seemed as if my spirit friend was behind me. At one point I caught a glimpse of my friend and I. We were standing on a cloud and we were both playing guitar and smiling. Finally I lost control and felt myself in bed. I laid gathering the memories of this experience together. My lucidity was not as great as it has been but I had never experienced such a variety of travels in one projection before. I felt very light when I got out of bed. The feeling lasted for maybe 10 minutes."

5>

(Another example of finding it hard to move. This entry illustrates one solution when you find it hard to move-just MOVE SLOWLY)

"...I climbed out. Saw my physical body laying on my bed. Went outside. Flew upwards. Lost vision. Woke up. Relaxed. Climbed back out. Went out through my bedroom door. It was nice and sunny outside. I remember noticing that I was naked. Climbed up onto the roof like Spiderman, I thought. When I got on the roof over my bedroom, I looked out across the street (which does not exist on the physical plane). There was a row of very quaint houses of a typically American design. One in particular had a very bright blue roof that caught my attention. I remember now that if I tried to proceed too quickly I lost my lock mold. So I slowly jumped off the roof and slowly walked across the street. It was "topsey turvey" when I moved like there were little hills where there were none in sight. This made it difficult to move and my movements felt slow and sluggish. Still, I just plodded on very carefully and slowly. I made it across the street and I went up the driveway of the above mentioned house..."

6>

(Another example of the wind force. Note here also some things we will discuss ahead: first, where I go, and second how I make some mischief. Where I went here was, I believe, a place where people go when they die. I will discuss this ahead. I will also discuss making mischief ahead.)

"...I flew through the wall into a second room and this room was darker but there was a neon purple color filling the room. I landed on the floor and there was someone there. A woman and a dwarf (or a child), if I recall correctly. I spoke with them for a few moments but I don't remember what was said. All of a sudden, a strong astral current grabbed me and started pulling me along backwards. I went passive and let it pull me. I wondered if maybe it would take me to Joey. But I knew she was in

California and I didn't really think the force would pull me that far. I wanted to try to turn myself around to try to see what was pulling me, then I thought better of doing this cause I figured I'd wake myself up.

The force was pulling me backwards and I was in a sitting position facing the opposite direction in which I was being pulled. Soon I saw that I was passing through walls, one after another, very quickly. From what glimpses I could catch, it seemed like I was passing through apartments, as if I was being pulled along through an apartment building. I passed through many apartments and saw many people doing many things. I recall in particular zipping through a kitchen and a man and woman were there either preparing food or putting away groceries. As I zipped by, they both saw me and had startled looks on their faces and the guy dropped whatever he was holding on to. I thought this was funny.

Soon, the images of apartments stopped though I was still being dragged along. I went through a big wall and it now seemed that I was in a dormitory. The force pulling me was weakening and I suspected that I was reaching my destination, whatever that might be. The dorm rooms I was being pulled through were very big, like gymnasiums and there were giant bunk-beds, a few in each room. There were young people about my age (22) all about, some lying reading on their huge beds, others involved in other activities.

The force was weak enough now that I could turn around. I saw two guys sitting on a bed eating candy. I yelled out to them, "Hey, watch this!", and I swooped down, as I was still being pulled along, and grabbed a handful of their candy. They seemed very miffed about this, but I quickly disappeared through a wall and was out of their sight. I remember that all of the young people I saw looked very avante garde with punk rock haircuts, wearing "trendy" clothes, like the New York art scene or something.

Finally, I felt the current really weaken and it stopped pulling me along, and I glided to the ground. I was standing in a smaller room and there was another room off to my side with big picture windows along the wall, looking outside...."

(END OF ENTRIES)

So, those are some examples of locomotion during an OOB. Now, as I said above, if you find it hard to move, just go slowly. Also, if you find it difficult to fly, that is, say you go to fly away but instead only drift up a couple of feet, here is what you can do; PRETEND YOU ARE WALKING UP STAIRS. I have found that this works for me. If I take big steps upward, I will continue to ascend. This works good when you can fly a little bit, but not very well.

2. Moving Through walls

Next of course, is the well known trick of passing through walls. Often during your OOBs you do not need to use doors to exit from a place, you can pass right through the wall.

However, just like with flying, this only works sometimes. Again, I don't know why it only works sometimes, but that is what I have discovered. One thing to try to do if you cannot pass through a wall is to turn around and try to pass through backwards. This is what Greene recommends and I have found it to work on a number of occasions. However, sometimes even this does not work and all you can do is smash the wall down, which is what the following entries illustrate.

7>

"...All I could see as an escape route were the windows to our left. The windows were sunk back and about 7 feet off the ground. There were a series of pipes blocking the way so I hovered up into the air. The children seemed amazed to watch me fly. I turned and flew between the pipes up to the window. I tried to pass through the window but could not. I tried turning around and doing the same, it didn't work. I tried to lunge through the adjacent wall, and that didn't work either. So I smashed the window with my hand and broke it. It took about 4 or 5 smashes till I made a safe hole to climb through. Nothing happened to my hand when I smashed the glass. I climbed with some trouble out the window..."

8>

(This example illustrates the "blipping" I spoke of earlier. You don't always go where you want to during an OOBE as you can see from this example.)

"...I made my way into the adjacent kitchen. I saw through a window up over the sink that it was raining outside, and I could feel that pleasant fresh feeling that one feels on warm and sunny rainy days. I was really surprised that it rained on the astral plane and that it felt so similar to what it's like on the physical plane. I really wanted to go outside and feel the rain for myself. I tried to pass through the wall to get outside but I couldn't. I tried to go forward and backward, but just couldn't pass through the wall. The window was open, but there was a screen blocking my way. I tried to open the screen but couldn't, so I decided to tear the window out. I smashed through it but the hole was too small to crawl through, so I tore away the wall around the window. But the hole was still too small to pass through! So I tore down the whole kitchen wall! I figured, hell, it was just somebody's thought-form anyway, and they could reconstruct it easy enough! Now the hole was big enough to climb through and I jumped through it. But I wasn't outside! Instead, I was in a strange and unfamiliar hallway. I turned around and the kitchen with the hole in the wall was gone! There was just a door there now..."

(END OF ENTRIES)

You can also see from this last example how space does NOT always behave in the OOBE realm the way it behaves here in the physical plane. I had ripped the whole window out, and you'd have thought I'd be able to climb through the hole, but I could not!

I really did end up tearing down the whole kitchen wall before I could get through the hole I made! Of course, this doesn't make any sense when we think of it in physical terms, and I was confused about this during my projection. We can also see here another example of making mischief during an OOB. It's not very common to go destroying walls in strange houses here on the physical plane!

Yet, during an OOB, there is a carefree sense that you can get away with anything you want. Monroe calls such behavior "being a Wild One". We will talk more about this later.

So, that's it about moving through walls.

3. Exercising Psychic Powers

Aside from the locomotion tricks discussed above, perhaps the most amazing thing you can do during your OOBs is use psychic powers. Almost all the psychic powers described can be performed extraordinarily easily during an OOB. As a matter of fact, you will find yourself automatically using psychic powers during your projections. What you want to do is RECOGNIZE when this is happening, and that is why I am pointing out here that this will happen automatically during your OOBs. Some of the psychic powers you will find yourself using during an OOB are the following: seeing visions (or using clairvoyance), reading minds, psychokinesis (moving things with your mind), and even experiencing memories of past (and future) lives. Also, strange as this sounds, you can have an OOB while you are having an OOB! That is, you can leave your body while you are projecting! I will give an example of this below.

I had found myself automatically doing some of these things but not really understanding what was happening. The first book I found that described this possibility was a Seth book called "Dreams and Projections of Consciousness" where Seth says flat out that you can use psychic abilities while out-of-body.

After reading this, it was completely clear to me that this was indeed true and that I had automatically been doing this all along. Since that time I have had many occasions to experiment with these abilities while out-of-body.

And also very important is the fact that you use psychic abilities all the time in your dreams. Very often you will mind-read or have memories of past lives in dreams, but, since you are not lucid, it seems like no big deal during the dream. If however, you make the attempt to remember your dreams as I prescribed earlier in the notes, you will find yourself remembering occurrences of you using psychic abilities during your dreams. I will also list here an example of me using psychic abilities in one of my dreams.

Finally, I should also say that, once you start astral projecting you will find that you will astral project from within your dreams.

You will be in a dream, and in the dream you will get the idea to astral project. This is a different phenomena from becoming lucid during a dream that we have already discussed. When you become lucid during a dream, you will still be in the same dream, only now you will be lucid. When you astral project from a dream you will LEAVE the dream you were in and enter a projection. Often, when you wake up from the projection you will be back in the dream that you

had left and you will NOT realize that you are dreaming. This is a weird situation to be in, but it has happened to me many times. Two of my entries below will illustrate doing this.

Here are some examples from my journal:

9>

(Note, this example also illustrates the kinds of Denizins you will meet in your projections. In this case I meet a talking rhinoceros! Here, I am only using this entry to illustrate that there seemed to be telepathy between me and the rhino. I will discuss meetings the Denizins of the OOB realm in the next section.)

"...Suddenly, the suburbs ended and I was at a field. There was a dirt road winding through it, and woods off in the distance. I landed and began walking along the dirt path. There was a fork in the path ahead of me, and standing there was a little rhinoceros. It was about four feet tall and was wearing a french barrette on its head. I approached the rhino, and it looked at me and said "Do you need a ride?" I was surprised that it talked but was pleased with its congeniality. I said, "sure." So I climbed on its back and we trotted off into the woods. I began to sing and the rhino sang with me. I was singing a Led Zeppelin song ("You need coolin', baby I'm not fooling..."), and the rhino was singing along with me. It was interesting, as if the rhino could read my thoughts, and pick the words and melody out of my mind to sing along..."

10>

(This is an example of me using telepathy in a dream)

"This experience was a dream. I'm including it here because, in this dream, I unquestionably utilized telepathy. Telepathy is the direct reading of another person's mind. Seth says in his books (those books produced by Jane Roberts and Robert Butts) that we all very naturally use psychic abilities in our dreams, abilities that we do not normally use in our waking life. He says that we usually aren't aware that we are using these psychic abilities because we make no reasonable attempts to remember our dream life, let alone pay attention well enough when we are actually dreaming to recognize that we are doing something that would seem very abnormal if we were to be doing it while we were awake here in the physical plane. This dream is a perfect illustration of the utilization of psychic abilities in a dream, and, and such, it is also wonderful confirmation of Seth's ideas.

I had been at a picnic. I walked into the house where the picnic was at, and upon entering the door I was now in the laboratory.

(an example of blipping!).

Blaine (who is my boss) was asking me if I had completed the experiment yet. I told him I had just set it up. Now, from my standpoint as a chemist, the "reaction" I was running in the dream was extremely interesting. What I was doing in the dream involved taking a sample of brain DNA (from a dog that had been given a heart attack)

and placing this DNA on a little machine. This machine had on it a screen that magnified the chemical reactions taking place and allowed us to directly view what the molecules were doing.

There is no such machine here on the physical plane. I often sit here on the physical plane and wonder how to make such a machine. The one who does will not only become very famous, but very rich as well.

At any rate, Blaine was standing on the other side of the lab bench from me watching as I was viewing the screen. Looking at the screen I began to realize what was going on in the reaction. What I saw was that the DNA was damaged and that it looked like fish DNA, not dog DNA. This I was thinking to myself, but Blaine literally and directly read this out of my mind. Then I felt him think, "It's not the base pairs, it's the structure of the entire chromosome." I heard him think this as if it was in my head. Then I started thinking, "That's right! It's the chromosomes, and the molecules are struggling to reassemble themselves. The damage has caused the chromosomes to degenerate into that of a fish. But these are dog chromosomes, and they are struggling like hell in there to reconstruct themselves into dog chromosomes." Then I felt a deep and very sincere sympathy come over me for these poor molecules that were in there struggling to put themselves back together again, but simply couldn't. It was a very strong emotion that I felt. Blaine didn't say anything, but it was obvious that he again felt directly what I was feeling and thinking. Then I felt his thoughts. He was realizing that I was right and then he, who is a doctor and sees many suffering heart attack victims, realized, or perhaps actually felt for a second, exactly the true suffering of people who have had heart attacks. And I very clearly felt in my mind and emotions what Blaine was feeling and thinking and an overwhelming pity and sorrow came over me as I read Blaine's sense of the profound tragedy suffered by his heart attack patients. It was with this feeling that I woke up."

11>

(Here was a short, but what I consider to be an extraordinary projection. Here I tried an experiment based on what I had read in the Seth books. Note also that illustrated here are many other ideas we have discussed. Also note that this is an example of astral projecting while in a dream, except here, after the projection, I actually woke up here on the physical plane and did not return to my dream. Also, I use telekinesis in this projection to open a window.)

"Seth's ideas guided my thoughts in this one.

Laid down to nap at 7 PM, tried to leave. Fell asleep and dreamed I was playing music. In the dream I decided to go to bed and try to project. I had that "headrush" feeling. Then I thought to myself, "maybe I'm already here." I opened my eyes and was lying on a couch in an unfamiliar living room. It seemed my little brother Jim was sleeping in a chair. I stood up looking around. I realized, "I **am** here!" I became aware and concerned about my stability. Went and looked out the window,

considering flying outside to explore. Outside it was a windy and chilly gray day. I pulled back the window with my mind and climbed out on the outer ledge.

I began recalling some stuff I had read in a Seth book. He said we live different lives over here, and that our dream mind has memories of its own, distinct from the memories belonging to our physical personality. I noticed that I didn't seem to have a body. I flew from the window, but then saw a reflection of my body in the window. I landed in the front yard but my lockmold was wavering. I struggled to hold it.

Outside reminded me of my brother's house by the lake. When I felt sufficiently stable I stood there in the front yard searching my memory for memories from my dream mind. I heard a girl say something. Then my vision began to fade and in the darkness before my eyes I thought I saw outer space. I was fighting to keep my lockmold, and I was still searching for dream memories.

I was thinking to myself, "I want to integrate my waking and dream minds." I went to go to hitch hike along the road but faded out.

Felt myself entering into my body. Felt my awareness of the physical plane take over, overwhelming my projection memories. I fought to recall this experience. Gathered up the memories then laid in bed reflecting on Seth's ideas. His is a very powerful approach to understanding. I wonder if the reason I'm "stupider" over there has to do with a blurring of waking and dream minds. Got out of bed, went and ate, then recorded this."

12>

(Here is an example of me using clairvoyance during an OOBE)

"At some point I stopped whatever I had been doing and tried to meditate with the intent to see my chakras. I sat down (with my eyes open, looking at myself) and began concentrating on trying to see the spectrum of my chakras. Initially, nothing happened. But after a few moments, very faint colors appeared at the various centers. Then I shut my eyes, and my sight clicked in with my eyes closed. I was wearing what I thought was a blue gown with golden flowers etched into it, or hanging from it. There were very complex etchings throughout the whole robe. There was one big flower that was distinctly noticeable, the stem coming out from my waist (which I had originally thought was a belt) and lying on the floor between my legs. When I saw all this I thought, "What's this robe? I wanted to see my chakras!" Then it dawned on me that these **were** my chakras. Then I lost consciousness and went off into other adventures.

As I sit here and write, I wonder if that robe was some type of representation of my Etheric body, displaying the more active chakras as flowers, and the complex etchings being the nadis. However, I'm not sure."

13>

(Here is another example of me astral projecting from a dream. What is also interesting here was that during this projection I had an amazing clairvoyant vision. After the projection, I indeed "woke-up" back in my dream, unaware that I was dreaming!)

"...My dream involved me, JC and a bunch of other people. We were all roommates in a big house. I was unaware that I was dreaming. There was a party going on or something. We were down in the basement hanging out. However, at some point in the dream I looked at JC and told him I'd be back in a little bit because I was going to go up to my room and try to project!

I went up to my bedroom in this dream house. Again, at this point I thought everything was normal and had no idea I was dreaming. I lay down on my bed and started concentrating to leave just exactly like I always do on the physical plane. However, when I laid down, shut my eyes and began concentrating, the effect was intensely more dramatic than it is on the physical plane. I got results almost as soon as I shut my eyes (compared to the 15 to 30 minutes it usually seems to take on the physical plane). Still I was unaware that I was projecting out of a dream. Instead of seeing the "stars" (entopic light) filling the darkness behind my closed eyes, the effect was more like when I'm in the void during a projection. But, again, at the time I didn't recognize this, I only remember it now as I write this entry.

Then, practically immediately, imagery began to form. What I saw looked like a hole forming in the fog. What I thought at the moment was that a gateway to the astral plane was forming. I laid there trying to transfer my consciousness from my body into this gate. The "gate" imagery itself was vivid and well focused, kind of a blue swirling mist with stars (little pinpoints of light) blinking on and off in it. After a few moments of concentration, I was standing at the gate.

I was floating off the ground in what seemed to be a mist filled cave. There was lots of light to see by, and I was definitely not in the void. I was standing at the back wall of this cave facing the entrance that was about 50 feet ahead of me. Beyond the entrance all I could see was mist. Under me to my right, was a table with little objects lined up on it. Also to my right were objects dangling from strings. Behind me were shelves with objects on them. My first impression of these things is that they reminded me of a souvenir stand. I wondered if I was in some type of store.

I landed on the cave floor, which was also covered in mist. I was looking about the cave, but I got the feeling of some invisible presence. It dawned on me to try something new. I thought to myself, "Try to visually focus in the way you do when you are hallucinating on acid" (this type of focusing involves a relaxation of ones vision, an intentional blurring of the normal visual field and a focusing on the entire visual field as opposed to simply looking at individual points within this field). I did this and immediately got dramatic effects. What I saw was incredible. As the image of the cave blurred, I began to perceive images behind, or within the cave. The image only lasted for a split second for it was difficult to maintain, and worse, what I saw startled me so much that, in sheer surprise, I "dropped" my focus (just like how someone can drop what they are holding in their hands when they get sufficiently startled).

What I saw was that now I was standing and looking out over a vast plateau that seemed to stretch to infinity in all directions. And on this plateau there was the most inordinate amount of activity and motion that I had ever seen. What I saw were

creatures and crowds of beings in all directions. And everything had that electric, neon self-glowing quality about it. Things that I did not know how to conceptualize were moving about in every direction, even passing through me! There were herds of things I could not recognize, and things that looked like swarms flying about. There was an indescribable dance of colors bathing the sky. Something as big as a horse seemed to pass right through me!

It seemed that huge beings were battling in front of me. Even to this day I have never seen anything so incredible and spectacular. All I could think the moment I had some faint glimmer of what I was seeing was "Oh my God! This is *the* Astral Plane!" But like I said, the scene was so overwhelming that I lost it almost the instant I had some small sense of what I was seeing.

I was standing back in the mist filled cave wondering what I had just seen.... (I then went met a monster in the cave, which lunged at me and caused me to lose my lockmold...)

The shock of its impact was enough to cause my lockmold to break. I was back on my bed. But I wasn't on the physical plane. I awoke back on my bed in the dream from which I had started. I still wasn't in the least bit aware that I was in a dream. At the moment, I was lying there pissed at myself for letting that monster scare me out of such a dramatic episode. I decided I was going to try to leave again. I relaxed and began to concentrate.

Again, a misty hole broke through the darkness behind my closed eyes. This time the gate was of an amorphous shape, about 5 feet in front of me. It looked different than the first one, and was colored differently too. It was blackish orange with stars in it - like I was looking into outer space (it looked, as a matter of fact, like the cover to Carl Sagan's book *Cosmos*). I tried to transfer my consciousness into it like I had done before, but it didn't work. After trying for a few moments, the gate faded and I thought to myself, "Goddamn that monster got me too worked up!" I decided I was done for the time being, so I got up out of bed. I was still in the dream house and still unaware that I was dreaming. I went looking for some paper to record my experience. I ended up going back into the basement where everyone was still hanging out. JC was there and the others and I told them all about the projection I had just had. Meanwhile, I was getting very concerned that I couldn't find any paper. Then I woke up for real, here on the physical plane.

For a moment I was totally disoriented (didn't know where I was at or what was going on), and then I realized what had just happened. And so, as is my wont, I recorded it here."

(END OF JOURNAL ENTRIES)

So, there you have it; using psychic powers during astral projections. This is an extremely dramatic thing to attempt while you are projecting and I encourage everybody to try and

remember that you CAN do these kinds of things while out-of-body. And don't forget, watch for yourself using psychic powers in your dreams too!

F. Places you can go: Sights and vistas

We are now going to get into the "travel brochure" part of this presentation. What I will discuss are the places that you can visit in the OOB state. As was stated earlier, the most useful generalization about the regions of the OOB state is the idea that these regions are divided into "rings" (as Monroe calls them) or "subplanes" (as occultists call them). To repeat, these subplanes form a spectrum that loosely corresponds to the spectrum of human emotions and states of mind. As human thought and feeling can range from the most lowly and debased to the most noble and inspirational, so too is it with the subplanes. Thus, I will break my description of the OOB realm down roughly along such lines. I will break the regions of the subplanes down into three broad categories: the lowest, the middle and the highest, and discuss each of these in turn.

I will also discuss two other aspects of the OOB realm, and these are 1. the void and 2. what I will call, for lack of a better term, the "surreal" regions. The surreal regions are those places that you may find yourself that barely fit the description of being called a "place". These surreal regions are often very abstract and tend to be spaces of color, sound and feeling, though there are others I will describe.

Generally speaking, what I am about to describe are ideas that are very common in the astral plane literature. What is amazing to me is that my own experiences in the OOB state support quite strongly the common reports of the astral plane (i.e. see Fox, Monroe, Leadbeater). This could be taken in two ways. You could say I was highly influenced by other people's reports of the nature of the astral plane, and thus saw what they described based on subconscious expectation. Or we could take the fact that much of my OOB experience is like what others report to indicate that the astral world is an (in some sense) "objective" world complete with its own sights, sounds and inhabitants. Throughout these notes I tend to go with the latter interpretation, but that does not preclude the former idea from having some degree of truth also. Generally, in my explorations of the OOB realm I have tried to stay as far away from biasing my interpretations of my experiences as I could. I have found other people's ideas as useful **guides** and have never accepted other people's reports without some degree of skepticism. And, as we shall see below, I believe I have observed a number of "realms" in the OOB state that are not commonly encountered, or have interpreted my experiences differently than how others have. This is particularly true with regard to the nature of the "surreal" regions that I will describe below.

So, the basic idea here is that the astral plane does, to a large extent, appear to be a common reality that we can all visit. Subjective factors definitely do enter into our observations in the nonphysical realms. My general advice is to always be skeptical of what you read and do not blindly accept what others say. This advice holds even for what I have written in these notes. Other people's observations are useful **guides** for your own activity, but, as I keep stressing, the bottom line is your own personal experience. If a thing works for you then that is what is important. If you discover that other people have experienced what you have, then that is fine. However, do not make the mistake of trying to mold your experiences to the reports of others.

So, this all said, let us begin our description of the OOB regions by first considering the void.

1. **Life in the void**

If you will recall, the void is a great dark space that I often find myself in. Recall that, when we use the "radio station" theory of consciousness I presented earlier, the void is like the empty space between radio stations on the radio dial. Now, it would seem like there isn't really too much you can say about a great big space of utter nothingness. In actuality though, being in the void takes up a great deal of my time during astral projections - sometimes much more than I'd like! I will not dwell at too great length on what it's like in the void, but I do want to describe it enough so that if you end up there you will know what to do.

Strangely enough, the void is not simply a homogeneous dark nothingness. There is actually a subtle type of variety to the different times I have been in the void. Sometimes it *is* simply a dark empty space. Other times though there is a hazy or smoky quality to it. Still other times I seem to see hazy ghost images of things. In this latter case, I suspect that I am very close to a subplane and am seeing ghost images of that subplane. Once I even met a being in the void! It was the only time I ever saw any kind of creature in the void. I will present this episode below because, at the very least, it is funny.

The general circumstances in which I find myself in the void are as follows. I sometimes appear in the void as soon as I leave my body. I have presented examples of this already. I will also appear in the void if I lose my lockmold on a subplane (you will recall that the lockmold is how well you are tuned in on a subplane). If I lose my lockmold, I usually do not wake up, but instead appear in the void.

Again, I am presenting these experiences here in case you find yourself in the void.

1>

(Seeing ghost images in the void.)

"(Had lost my lockmold and)...Then I was flying through the void. This time, though I was in the darkness of the void, I could perceive faint, but distinct silhouette images around me, and it seemed that I was flying through them. I thought to myself that I must be right on the border of some definite frequency or plane, not locked well enough to actually be there, but right next door to it so to speak. I kept flying on, and the silhouettes were very reminiscent of buildings, cars and city objects. As I flew on, at one point I got the impression that I had entered the water and was under the water, though I was still in the void. The silhouettes reminded me of fishes swimming around. They were not static images, they were moving too. Even though it seemed like I was under water, my movement through the void was no different, but I was afraid to materialize myself for fear of being under water. The silhouettes were interesting though. Some were of very large fish, at least 10 feet long. One looked like a shark and I passed close by it. Another one was a round squat shape about five feet in diameter. A school of swimming creatures passed me by. I remember too that when I would look upwards that I got the same effect that one observes swimming under water and looking

up at the surface. But I kept flying forward and soon it seemed like I had passed out of the water cause now the silhouettes I was passing through looked much different, less organic, like vertical strips. So now I tried to materialize myself. To materialize I stopped my forward motion and simply began to spin round and round. Also I began to concentrate on my hands, trying to lift them up and look at them. Then I began to see the neatest thing. As my hands began to form and I could start to see them, the silhouettes around me began to take on color and form. It was slow at first so I concentrated harder, and I watched an environment form around me. I was now out of the void and somewhere. I was standing in a forest, surrounded by all kinds of plants...."

2>

(A short description of the void.)

"Dream-awoke laying in my old bedroom at Ma's house. I "flopped" out of my body. Flew downstairs. Flew to front door, tried to pass through but went into void. Stayed in void for some time wondering what it is. There were no recognizable silhouettes, but there were distinct qualities or feelings.

At first the darkness was very "electric." Eventually the void seemed like a heavy fog. I got the idea to try to look at my hands. Watched my body and a red tile floor materialize around me as the fogginess of the void faded away. I was in an empty room with a red tile floor, it seemed like a small gymnasium or something...."

3>

(Here is when I met a strange creature in the void.)

"...I was in the void. Was floating listlessly, enjoying then peace and quiet, figuring out what I was going to do next. I looked off in the darkness before me and was absolutely amazed at what I saw, for coming towards me far off in the distance was a creature of some kind! I was totally startled. I had never seen another being in the void before! I slowly started to fly towards the creature, curiously studying it, as it moved towards me. At first, all I could see was that it was some type of humanoid, but as I got closer to it I could make out more detail. It had a human body, but its face resembled that of a wolf. It had a hairy face, long snout, and dark eyes. It was wearing an outfit that reminded me of the Green Goblin from the Spiderman comic books. As it got closer I could hear it mumbling to itself. I was about 10 feet in front of it, but it acted as if I was not there and simply kept mumbling to itself and kept moving towards me. I asked it what it was doing and, all of a sudden it was on top of me! The thing grabbed me and started to carry me off! I couldn't believe it!

I was not scared at all, but surprised. I started to struggle and was telling it to let me go. I said "you can't do anything to me, I'm astral projecting!". It continued to ignore me and simply kept carrying me through the void. It mumbled something to itself about "a specimen for the bioleum". I heard this and realized that this thing intended to

make me a specimen in some kind of museum! I couldn't believe this was happening to me. I kept yelling at it telling it I was astral projecting and I could wake up at any moment. It ignored me and kept carrying me forward. In the excitement of my struggling, I lost my lockmold and woke up in my physical body.

Upon waking, I felt stupid for acting the way I did. I should have let it carry me to wherever it was going so I could have learned where this creature came from. Still, this was the first time I ever saw a creature of any kind in the void!"

(END OF ENTRIES)

2. Life on the planes

Let's now go onto the scenic elements of the OOBIE realm. Again, I will divide these up into four major realms: the lower, the middle (or "normal"), the higher and the surreal realms. And again, each of these broad realms corresponds to states.

a) The Lower Realms

The lower realms of the subplanes are easily identified. They are often dark as if it is nighttime outside. There is also an eerie feel to the lower subplanes. They just feel creepy. Often, it is hard to move on the lower subplanes, similar to being on the Etheric plane, where your movement seems to be retarded and in slow motion. And of course, you will encounter ghoulish creatures on these subplanes.

You don't need to fear anything you encounter on these subplanes. First, it is unlikely you will spend any amount of time on these subplanes. I always have a bad lockmold on these planes, and thus, often "fade-out" of these lower subplanes within minutes. Since they do correspond to the worst of human existence, you'd have to be pretty evil yourself to be in tune with these subplanes.

Second, it's actually kind of therapeutic and eye opening to see these planes. Part of the goal of overcoming fear means opening up to the aspects of life revealed by these lower subplanes. By understanding these kinds of energies you transform them into something better.

If you repress these energies, they only continue to ferment into something even worse. So, my advice is, if you find yourself on the lower subplanes, don't be afraid of what you encounter there. Take it as a learning experience.

Now, if you are on a lower subplane, how to you get out of it? One trick I learned is the following: fly through the ceiling of wherever you are at. When you do this, you will go through the ceiling and come up through the floor of the same room you just left! But actually, it will not be the exact same room; it will be the room but on a higher subplane. Do this a few times until you see light outside and do not feel the heavy, eerie feeling anymore. You will then be on a higher subplane. This does not always work, but it does work sometimes, so it's worth giving it a try.

Your other alternative is to just wait it out. As I said, it is unlikely, if you are an average, normal person, that you will be able to keep your lockmold stable on these subplanes for any extended period of time. If you just wait it out, you will probably disappear from that subplane

within a couple of minutes anyway. If you choose this option, just explore your environment. Like I said, and you have to always keep this in mind when you project, nothing can hurt you when you are out of body. You are literally indestructible. YOU are the only thing that can hurt you, and the only way this can happen is by letting your own fears take you over. If you learn to control your fear, you will ALWAYS be safe out of body.

This said, let me give a couple of examples of what the lower subplanes are like.

1>

(A typical lower subplane experience.)

"Felt myself wake up on the physical. Tried to remember my dream but it faded quickly. That made me mad. Plus I hadn't projected for several days, and that sucked too. I thought "go for it" and pretended I was jumping out of my body - and I did!

Surprised, I floated in my room for a brief instant and then faded. At first I thought I was in the void, but then I saw all kinds of humanoid silhouettes around me. There were all kinds of them marching like sleep walkers. It was a dark and eerie environment. I couldn't fly well and I felt like I was zipping along like a balloon. I shot past a silhouette and it bent out of my way in a distorted and unnatural manner-like it bent sideways or something. I tried to look at my hands, but it was very difficult. Woke up.

This was a very short projection - less than a minute.

I bet I was on the lowest astral plane. I think I saw a bunch of "lost souls". It was very much like Leadbeater described it - dark, heavy, hard to control one's movements. The silhouettes were like zombies; no self-consciousness, they just marched like a herd."

2>

(Another typical lower subplane experience.)

"...Drifted off to sleep again, imagining I was in the living room downstairs. In the next instant, I was downstairs! I was floating by the ceiling in the living room. It was dark, like nighttime. This time I could move, but it was very difficult. I pulled myself to the floor. I looked at the front door. The dimensions of the room were distorted and enlarged. The door looked far away, like in a telescope. I walked toward the door with great difficulty. I felt a small sense of triumph when I finally reached the door. I opened the door and walked out onto the porch. My movement became a little easier. I looked outside to the street. It seemed to be just before dawn. In the street, I saw two figures running carrying something looking like sacks over their shoulders. They seemed to be wearing what looked like long underwear. They were hunched over as they ran. I don't know what they were, though they were humanoid. My first impression is that they were thieves running from the scene of the crime.

But the way they moved, all hunched and distorted made me think that they might be demons or some lowly astral creatures. At any rate, they disappeared across the street. They didn't notice me at all. I wanted to follow them but I knew I couldn't move as fast as they were. Then I flew out through the porch window around to the side of the house. Once outside, everything seemed really dark and murky, and distorted. I realized I was on the lowest astral plane and got scared. I wanted to leave and felt myself back in my body..."

3>

(This entry illustrates some of the denizens of the lower subplanes, a topic to which we will return). Was in one of those scary brown heavy regions.

Thought I had woke up. Was lying in bed and I heard soft but threatening hissing voices. It made me scared. Had my back to the voices but it sounded like they were getting closer. Realized I was in the nasty Etheric levels and tried to wake myself up. It backfired and I went into a higher dream level for a moment but lost lucidity and had a false awakening. Thought I had woke onto the physical but actually was in some dream facsimile of my room at Dad's. Saw a clear blue sky through crack in the curtains and it made me feel great; couldn't believe I let those stupid Etheric ghouls get to me. Went back to sleep unafraid.

Next I knew I was in the Etheric again and heard the voices. This time I was irked and determined to confront them. I got up, with difficulty and said, also with much difficulty, "Whoever you are, come out and face me, I demand it!" Looking forward with it still appearing that I was in my Dads (actually it didn't feel like Dads in the episode, more like my own place but very comfortable), my brown curtains seemed to marshmallow out and it seemed this pack of strange humanoid creatures stepped through. My vision was very bad and I was having a difficult lockmold but I thought I saw about four of em. They had on long dingy robes and had strange distorted features. It seemed like they were yelling at me or something. I lashed out at them and stepped into them best I could. They seemed to disappear into the other wall.

Fell back asleep more happy than before. Mold was terrible the whole time, everything had a brown cast to it. I could barely move or speak. As I was falling off to sleep, kept thinking about how Leadbeater says that the initiate has a hard time moving on the lower planes. Boy he was right."

4>

(This is an example of using the "flying through the ceiling trick to get out of a lower subplane.)

"I struggled to get out. I flopped out of my body and rolled onto the floor. My vision was blinking but I quickly realized where I was at and thought, "Shit! I gotta get outta here!" I saw I was on the lowest astral plane. I felt that dark, heavy uncomfortable feeling. Everything was in grays and browns. And worst of all, there

were ghoulies all over my bedroom! They were broken and twisted bodies, moving about in their lethargic fashion. At least I didn't get frightened this time. I stayed level headed. My first thought was to wake myself up, but then I thought, "no, I'll just go to a higher plane." So I flew upwards through the ceiling, passed through the ceiling and came up through my floor. I did this a second time. Now there was sun shining through my window and the ghoulies were gone, and everything was in normal colors. I was quite pleased with myself.

I flew through the ceiling, this time going outside the house. It was sunny and beautiful outside..."

(END OF ENTRIES)

b) The Middle Realms

The middle planes are very much like our physical world.

Here you will find houses, schools, cities and buildings, forests and rivers and pretty much all the things you find on the physical plane. Remember though, we are NOT on the physical plane. These middle regions have a very ethereal feel to them compared to the physical plane.

One place you will often go in these middle subplanes is the room you are in when you project. In my case, this is always my bedroom. That fact that you will project into your bedroom will afford you many opportunities to compare what your bedroom is like in your projection to what it is like on the physical plane. When you study these differences, you will quickly realize that, when you project, you are NOT in the physical world. So, if you do find yourself projecting into the room that you are in, I highly encourage you to study the details of your astral bedroom and, as soon as you wake up, pay close attention to how what you saw in your projection was similar to or different from how your room is on the physical plane. I will give an example of this below.

One of the most interesting aspects of the middle subplanes is that many authors claim that in this region you will find discarnate people. In other words, these middle regions are where so-called "dead" people dwell, at least for a certain amount of time after their passing away. Thus, what you can find on these regions are places specifically designed for the recently dead. Such places take the form of hospitals or dormitories. Robert Monroe clearly describes such places. Monroe calls these "Rehab Centers", and I have visited them (or happened across them as the case may be) on many occasions. "Rehab Centers" exists in the astral world supposedly to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the recently deceased, to allow them to get used to their new surroundings and new condition. As a matter of fact, entry number 6, in file 8, where I describe being dragged by the wind force, is a description of one of these "Rehab Centers". In this case it was for younger people; older teenagers and people in their early and mid twenties. I will put another such description below. And, if I was ever skeptical of the idea of these "Rehab Centers", this skepticism was laid to rest when I actually MET a deceased friend of mine in one of my projections. I will describe this encounter later when I discuss interacting with the people you meet in your projections.

In general, you will find that the majority of your OOBes occur in the middle regions of the subplanes. I recommend that you explore these regions carefully. Observe the construction of the buildings and houses. Feel free to go into strange houses and just look around. You will actually observe many interesting things that are much different from the physical plane. For example, I was once in a shopping mall in one of my projections, and it seemed to go on and on forever. There was no exit that I could find. I had a similar experience in a school once.

Also, you will find many people here to talk to and communicate with. In a later section I will give suggestions for interacting with the people you meet in your projections. Here we are mainly interested in conveying some idea of what the middle regions of the subplanes are like. Let me now present a few of my journal entries of projections occurring on these middle subplanes which illustrate what is discussed above.

1>

(Here is an example of me projecting into my backyard and then waking up immediately and comparing my astral backyard to my physical backyard.)

"...I could feel myself laying on my bed in my physical body. Wanted to leave again. Began to relax and concentrated on staying dream-awake. Felt myself fall back into it. I jumped out and was in my bedroom. Turned and looked at my curtains. I tried to pass through them but couldn't. So I flew out my window - through the screen. I noticed that I was naked so I thought myself into some shorts. I flew out into the backyard, landed and sat on the grass. I wanted to fly off and explore but I thought that I should just sit there and observe details. I sat there and looked around trying to figure out how this environment was different from the one on the physical. Things looked normal. It looked like my backyard. The house next door looked like my neighbor's house. I even saw some of my neighbors in their yard down the street.

[Right now I'm awake on the physical and I just went outside and sat in the same spot I did in my projection to compare the two scenes, and there were many noticeable differences. First, where I saw my neighbors, there was no one there. I could not even see the house from where I was sitting in the backyard on the physical, the perspective was a lot broader in the projection. Second, in the projection, our backyard appeared much bigger and more open than it really is. Things seemed to be located in the same relative positions though. Third, the whole back yard was neater or tidier in the projection, and also "lighter". Just now when I was outside in the physical, the backyard had a "heavy", lush feeling that wasn't present in the projection. The grass needs to be cut in the physical but was short and neat in the projection.]

As I was sitting in my projection in the backyard the most unusual thing I noticed was that I could "see" the air. I've never seen anything like this on the physical. The air around me was moving like transparent sheets wrapping around and around one another. Also, these "sheets" were made of what looked like a fine mist of this white particulate matter that seemed to be graded from higher concentration to lower. The effect was something like when you see sunlight shining through a fine mist of water. I

only got to observe this effect for a moment because after I noticed it, my lockmold started to slip and I began to fade out. This "air effect" was the most significant thing I saw when I was actually sitting there in my projection. I was very fascinated while I was looking at it. Obviously, no such thing existed on the physical..."

2>

(This is an example of me discovering a "Rehab Center". In this case, it was a place for the elderly, and it was very much like a nursing home. Also, though it is somewhat premature in the notes, in the following entry I met what seemed to me during the projection to be a deceased person, a young child. I have decided to include this here for the sake of keeping the journal entry intact. Later I will discuss meeting deceased people in more detail.)

"Laid down. Broke consciousness. Was out of my body in my bedroom here at Dad's house. Passed out my window into the backyard but nothing looked familiar. Went around to the front and still didn't recognize anything. I can't recall any of the details. I wanted to fly away and explore so I shot upwards. I was afraid I'd blackout. I remember seeing suburb and city streets spread out below me. The scene below me looked like a bluish-green microchip. Then I blacked out. I was in the void and I tried like hell to fly downwards. I managed to go downwards somewhat and my vision faded back in and I saw the microchip looking city below me. There was a force tugging me back upward, but I resisted, broke it, and hovered back downwards. I watched the microchip scene turn back into city streets as I lowered myself. But now I was somewhere totally different than where I started and I still didn't recognize anything. I was standing in front of a building that had an official looking appearance. I went inside. There was a group of older women inside the doorway. I tried to speak with the one who looked the youngest (she looked to be maybe 50). I got her name, but she was basically ignoring me as if I was a bother to her. She was wearing a nurse outfit. I noticed that there were only old people around. I continued trying to talk to this nurse. I told her that I had a physical body at home, and that I was projecting and I wanted to know if she was aware of the fact that she was not in the physical world. Yet she continued to ignore me as she was too busy with the older folks. When I was talking to her, at some point a little blond boy with glasses, kind of nerdy looking, maybe 10 years old, appeared. He was hanging around me but I ignored him cause I was trying to talk to Kate or Katherine (the nurse). After the nurse left pushing someone in a wheel chair, I walked into what appeared to be a TV room. There was a TV on and a few old men sitting around watching it. I saw a bulletin board and went and tried to read it. I managed to read, with great difficulty, one line of what looked like a flyer announcing a party. I tried to reread the line so as to memorize it, but it now read something completely different. Familiar with this kind of a thing, I gave up on trying to read. The little boy was still following me around. I decided to leave. As I walked out, it dawned on me that this was probably an old folks home for recently dead people, like the kind that Robert Monroe describes. When I realized this, I really wanted to scam.

The little boy followed me outside, then he took off running in front of me and indicated that I should follow him. He ran across the street to an old abandoned house. He ran around to the back and "stepped" up this ten foot step onto a platform of some kind, that looked like a scaffold. The whole while I was following this kid I told him to slow down or that I'd disappear. When we got around back, it took me a bit of trouble to climb up onto the platform that he got onto with merely one step. But I managed to pull myself up there. When I got up on this platform he told me that "this was the funniest place with the best toys."

He was playing with a few broken wooden soldiers. I had the strange feeling that this child was dead and was simply running around unsupervised and uncontrolled on the astral plane. I started to fade and I held onto the child to stabilize myself. I tried to talk to him. I got that his name was Steven and he was from Illinois. He said his address was 1717 High Hill. Then he seemed to read my mind, cause I was going to ask him his zip code, but before I could he started mumbling a string of numbers. He didn't seem too intelligent. He seemed like a normal 10 year old. I asked him if he knew whether he was dead or if he was just dreaming. He told me he knew that his Dad was dead. As it was that my lockmold was unstable anyway, I faded out and awoke back in my physical body."

3>

(Here is the excerpt from the infinite shopping mall I mentioned above.)

"...Very dramatic and very very conscious. I was somewhere, don't remember where, or how I got there. I know I didn't like it though. It was a big place inside a building, high walls and giant rooms. It seemed like a giant shopping mall. Not giant in the sense of proportions, but giant in that it went on forever.

Actually, I got both senses from the place. I felt claustrophobic. The escalators looked more like roller coaster cars and I couldn't figure out how they went round like an actual escalator. I asked someone where the exit was, and they pointed down to a lower level. I flew down that way. My perceptions were strange, very 4 d. No matter how I moved, the front always stayed in front of me. Somehow I ended up in a big room. There were people in a queue for what I thought was a ticket window. I tried to pass through the wall but couldn't. It was kind of funny cause I was bouncing rapidly against the wall but not going through it. Someone in the queue pointed up at me saying something to the effect "the nerve of some people". I thought to myself "fuck you". I landed frustrated . Stood there wondering how I was going to get out of this place. Then my vision blacked out..."

(END OF ENTRIES)

This is all I am going to say about the middle regions of the OOB realm. Again, I want to stress that the majority of typical OOBs occur in these realms.

c) The Higher Realms

There are higher realms in the astral plane. I have not visited these as much as I have the lower and middle realms, which, given the psychological correspondence between the OOBÉ realms and one's personality, could be construed as a not too pleasant situation. Still, my few visits to the higher realms are characterized by the following. The higher realms appear much more ethereal than the middle realms. Colors are very delicate and "light" (i.e. the opposite of heavy). Colors and things can also appear very much like sparkling jewels. In general, the higher regions still have buildings and recognizable landscapes. The most important clue that you are in a higher region is **how it feels**. When in a higher region, everything feels really, really good. It is peaceful and satisfying and makes you feel light, relaxed and content.

It is my suspicion that here too, as with the middle realms, you will find regions where deceased people dwell. These are likely the regions people pass into after they have worn out their earthy desires which bind them to the middle regions. According to occultists, and other authors (Monroe, for example) these higher regions are NOT the final resting place for the departed. They are still intermediate stages in the long sojourn that occurs after the death of the physical body. Another thing that differentiates the middle from the higher regions is something I forgot to mention in the discussion of the middle regions. This is the fact that you may sometimes encounter dreaming people in the middle regions. How you can tell dreaming people from dead people will be discussed ahead. Here I just want to say that you rarely encounter dreamers in the higher OOBÉ regions. Let me now give a couple of journal entries that I believe were visits to the higher OOBÉ regions.

1>

(Here is an excerpt of what I feel was a projection to a higher subplane. It was a beautiful place. Note too, the potential romance.)

"...I faded in alongside a pink house that reminded me of my old place on Houghton Ave. - which is one of the reasons I thought I was in Houghton. Standing on the lawn I saw a white picket fence running up the walk to the front door. Across the street was a lake and beyond the lake an amazing horizon of sun and colors. Everything seemed to have a pinkish red tint to it. The colors were like soft delicate pastels. A warm breeze was blowing.

My movements were like slow motion as I walked through the front yard (not the slow motion kind of movement that makes it difficult to move, but a slow motion in the sense of being very dream like).

My thoughts seemed very removed from my situation. The whole thing seemed to be beautifully unreal (but not contrived, like I feel when I'm in a thought-form. This feeling was different, what one might call a "sense of surrealism"). These feelings were compounded by a deep realization of the novelty of these feelings in the context of the fact that I was projecting. I was trying to figure out what to do next. Should I fly into

the colored sky-scape? Should I walk about and explore? I dreamily went up and leaned on the picket fence in awe of the serene beauty that was filling me at the moment.

Then, from across the street came a very beautiful blond girl. She was wearing a black sleeveless top and a plaid skirt of greens, yellows and reds. Her beauty fit in exquisitely with this place. She ran across the street towards the house I was at. She walked up the front walk past me apparently not noticing me.

"Hey, Blonde," I called to her. My voice was distorted and in slow motion. I waved at her and my motions were in slow motion. She turned and saw me. I tried to say 'come here', but the words wouldn't come out. But she could tell what I wanted for she walked over to me. Up close she was even more beautiful than I first thought. Straight blond hair draped over her elfin features, thin high cheek bones, slender green eyes, cute upturned nose. I was irresistibly drawn to her. We hugged. I caressed her breast which felt so soft and real. She responded to me erotically and sensuously. We kissed and I felt myself begin to fade. I pressed my entire body against hers trying to stabilize myself. I rubbed my face, arms, legs, torso and groin against hers. Still clutching her I faded out..."

2>

(Here is another episode in which I believe I was in a higher region. The place in the following entry is very much like a place described by spiritualists called "Summer Land", which is a beautiful meadow strewn region where the deceased rest. Note that this occurred in the same projection where I was in the infinite mall.)

"(after I had escaped the shopping mall and was in the void for a while)...I materialized somewhere else! I was now standing outside, in what seemed to be a pleasant countryside. There was a guy and a girl standing near me looking at me. They looked like hippies to me. Both were wearing loose white tops and white skirts, with sandals on their feet. She was blond and cute, he had a beard. I asked them where I was at. They seemed to be paying attention to me. I asked them what was this place and what their names were. They didn't respond to my questions but we did talk. The girl said something to me but I thought she was just speaking nonsense. Yet it didn't seem to matter. There was an incredible happiness that filled me and I wanted to make love to her. She took me by the hand and I walked with them. I saw wood shacks dotted about and other people around the shacks. The area seemed to be a beautiful meadowland of rolling hills of green and yellow. I remember fighting to hold my lock mold, and they seemed to sense this and we moved slowly and cautiously. We ended up on a hill under a tree. I flew up into the tree, and they flew with me, still holding my hand. We frolicked about the tree in the air. The tree seemed very 4-d, as if I could see many perspectives simultaneously, and the tree looked as if it was weightless. I remember looking in her face as she was suspended above me, and I lost the lock mold. I felt it coming though because we were moving rapidly, dancing in the air around the tree. Then I was in blackness again..."

d) The Surreal Regions

Finally, I want to end this survey of the places you may go by describing what I will call the "surreal" regions.

As I said, these are realms of dancing sounds and colors. They are not really "places" in the sense we normally think of the word "place". I have actually been in these surreal regions quite a bit. Getting to them has a lot to do with the void. Often, I will be in the void and it will transform into a surreal region. What are the surreal regions? There are a couple of answers to this question as far as I can tell. Some of the surreal regions are related to the physical plane or how the physical plane affects the Etheric plane. That is, such regions have something to do with perceiving the physical plane from a viewpoint we normally cannot. Many times I have seen what look to me like biological structures in my projections, and I wonder if I may be actually seeing my brain or my own body from on the inside. That is, sometimes it seems like my perception "shrinks" and I can see things that normally one would need a microscope to see. This is one class of surreal region.

Now, the idea of perceiving minute things that we cannot see with our normal vision is not new. Yogis have described this ability for centuries. The earliest known description of this psychic ability is in Patanjali's Yoga sutras, which dates back to 500 B.C.. At the turn of the century Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater used this psychic ability, which they called "magnifying clairvoyance" to literally see atoms and molecules, and they published these observations in a book called Occult Chemistry. In 1980, this ability was dubbed "micro-psi" by Stephen Phillips, a physicist who studied Besant and Leadbeater's descriptions of atoms. The Hindu name for this ability is "anima" and anima is this name I will use.

What I am saying is that you will be able to use this ability, anima, when out-of-body. This will occur in two contexts. In the first case, this may be the basis for some of the hypnogogic images you see. That is, during hypnagogia, some of what you may see may actually be you using anima, shrinking down your perception and actually seeing the cellular and molecular structures of which your body is composed. I will give examples of this below. The other context in which you may find yourself using the anima ability is that you will seem to be in a PLACE that is very "biological" looking. In this case you are not merely viewing biological structures, but are actually *inside* of them.

Now, in both cases, I do NOT believe you are literally viewing your physical body. I feel that these perceptions exist on the Etheric plane. So what you are seeing is Etheric plane images that correspond to biological structures inside your body. This is very similar to when you see your bedroom during a projection; it is not your physical bedroom, but it's Etheric counterpart. Whatever the truth behind these biological appearing images, there is no question that you may see them.

The second type of surreal regions you may visit falls into a different category than the anima images. This second category of surreal regions is closely related to the void. Sometimes

you may be in the void and it will transform into a space of abstract colors and shapes. You will have a hard time putting what you see in such spaces into words. The shapes and colors will also move and be very dynamic. When you are in such a surreal space, it may either transform back into the void, or you may transform into one of the middle or higher regions of the astral plane.

What is going on here is the following. When you move from the void to a subplane (using the hands trick, for example), what you are doing is phasing into that subplane. Again, using our "radio station theory of consciousness", this is analogous to moving from a region of static on the radio to tuning into a radio station. Now, tuning into a subplane, though it is **analogous** to tuning into a radio station on your radio, is by no means the same process. When you are tuning into a subplane during an OOB, it is possible to PARTIALLY tune into a subplane and perceive that subplane from a completely different angle or perspective than if you have completely tuned into the subplane. When you perceive a subplane from such a partial angle, it looks TOTALLY DIFFERENT than it does if you tune into it completely. What you see during a partial tuning into a subplane is a weird space of moving colors and geometric patterns. In other words, you appear to be in a surreal region. Now, this idea is not speculation on my part. I have literally observed this to be the case. I will give an example below showing how this works.

So, in summary, I have discovered two types of surreal regions encountered during OOBs. The first results from anima and these are perceptions of biological and molecular spaces. The second results from partially tuning into a subplane. Both types of surreal space are perceived as very abstract looking "places" of moving colors and geometric images. I have made minor references to these types of perceptions in some of the entries I have listed so far. In one I speak of falling through the "meme bacteria" and this is a description of using anima to see biological structures. These "meme bacteria" are green and purple neonish colored images, and they may appear as green tubes with purple liquid flowing through them (which I think may be me seeing my blood flowing through my veins or arteries), but they may also appear as swirling vortexes of green and purple. or as a wall of green and purple patterns. I also have referred to seeing the "green and purple" images during hypnogogia and these also refer to using anima.

Finally, to close I want to say that the two categories of surreal space I describe here by no means exhaust the possible causes of surreal spaces in the OOB realm. According to reports by occultists, yogis and other OOB authors, there are many types of surreal spaces including planes beyond the astral. The reader interested in further information is referred to the bibliography. This said, let me list some of my experiences in surreal regions while out-of-body.

1>

(Earlier in these notes I presented an entry in which I discussed the astral "wind").

I was being dragged along by the wind force, in FILE 8, entry 2 under the heading "a. Moving, Flying and the "Wind". While I was being dragged backwards by this wind force, I decided to turn around and see if I could see what was dragging me. When I turned around I saw a surreal landscape. The following is the continuation of

the entry from FILE 8, and I believe this was an anima based perception.)" ...For a while I relaxed and let it drag me along. Soon though I became impatient and wanted to see if I could turn myself around and see what was dragging me. I struggled very hard to pull myself around, and it felt like I was trying to pull myself against hurricane winds. When I had my back to the direction of this wind force, I remember seeing trees pass me by at high velocity. But I managed to turn around and what I saw was unbelievable and utterly amazing. I don't even really know how to describe it! When, after great effort, I turned myself around, I was no longer seeing the forest. Instead I was looking onto this unbelievable colored field and there were three spheres ahead of me and they had something that looked like butterflies dancing in each of them. But they were not butterflies, though they looked a little like them. Whatever they were, there was one each inside of the three spheres and these "butterflies" were spinning and rotating within the sphere and constantly changing color. The way they changed color was strange, it was as if colors were welling into them from somewhere I could not see, like a liquid, and flowing around inside of these butterfly creatures.

I was both awed and confused; confused that the forest was gone, and confused at what I was looking at, awed because whatever I was looking at was very, very beautiful.

My first thought was, "God, this looks like what Leadbeater describes the astral plane to look like." But there was a peculiar quality to the scene that reminded me of looking under a microscope. I began to wonder if I was seeing the inside of my brain somehow. The "butterfly" things were extremely reminiscent of cellular appearances. The background behind the three spheres looked like a landscape, somewhat reminiscent of a garden, but it was strangely and complexly colored, most of the details escaping me now except the preponderance of pink colors, and the effect of sunset-like colors.

Also, I experienced another unique sensation after I had turned around. I still felt like I was being pulled forward by the wind, though that was weakening. I could see nothing in front of me that seemed to be pulling me. And the strange field of colors with its dancing "butterflies", though appearing three dimensional, looked like it was very close to my face. But strangest of all was a very weird feeling that I could pull off the top of my head. This was the first time I had felt this sensation though it would not be the last. The feeling is that, at the very top line of my visual field, I can reach underneath and pull upwards, and the top of my head would rip off. Obviously, this is not a pleasant feeling, but I was very curious as to what it was and why I felt it, and if the feeling had any connection to the scene before me, which I was thinking more and more was some inner view of some type of cells and biological structures.

Yet in short order, the pulling of the wind died away, I felt myself slowing down, and the scene before me faded away. I was back in my bedroom again, still lucid in the projection state..."

2>

(Here is the first time I had been to a surreal region resulting from partially tuning into a subplane. You can see below that I suspected my perceptions were due to partially tuning into a subplane, but I was not certain at this point.)

"I was back in the void again. This time though it was different from the last time. I was seeing really complex geometrical patterns come spinning past me. It's hard to remember exact details, but every now and then I'd see these really intense color patterns. It was hard to conceptualize what I was looking at in this "void". I'd be zipping along checking out these spirograph patterns then all of a sudden I'd see a color pattern. It wasn't that these color patterns would appear before me in the void like the black and white spirograph patterns, it was more like I would "fall" backwards, see these intense color patterns, then "slip forward" back into the void. I was wondering if I was bordering on some deeper, more abstract plane and was blinking in and out of it or something. I do remember seeing these really intense lime-green cones that were embedded in some type of complicated geometrical pattern. I remember yellow and purple too. At some point I did my spinning trick and my hand trick and cause myself to materialize again. Now I was in what seemed like an upstairs flat or apartment..."

3>

(In this projection, I literally saw first hand how the surreal space I was in resulted from seeing a subplane from a different perspective, so to speak. In other words, it was during this projection that I saw absolutely that my perception of a surreal space was related to a definite subplane.)

"Had been up all night studying for an exam and gabbing with John. Went to bed about 5:00 AM. I fell asleep almost immediately. Next thing I knew I was walking through a dance club, very reminiscent of the Detroit dance club scene. The place was large and dark, and there was a huge dance floor filled with very underground looking people. I was not lucid at this point, but I had a very strong feeling that something was up. I walked off of the dance floor into another room that was a bar. Sitting at the bar was my good friend Eric, with whom I had jammed in a band. When I saw Eric it dawned on me -- I was in the dream world! And also, at this realization, I most definitely experienced the "headrush" feeling. My lucidity was incredible. Everything was absolutely clear and vivid. I felt exactly like I do when I'm awake. Once my lucidity clicked in though, I became very aware of my potential to fade out so I moved very slowly and carefully..."

(I spoke to Eric, then faded out into the void)

I seemed to now be floating in the void. However, there were what seemed to be colored triangles moving around, crossing and spinning over one another making distinctly geometric patterns in front of me. The colors were mainly a yellowish green with red, orange and pink hues and they had the texture of clear and smoky, but smooth glass. "This is a weird view of the void," I thought to myself. I stared at these patterns wondering what the hell I was looking at. I began to focus harder and harder on these

patterns, trying to discern some detail in them. Then, as I was focusing, the most incredible thing happened. I watched these patterns "solidify" and transform into the scene on the dance floor of the club I had just left. The spinning triangles were actually the dancing people in the club! I was amazed. I relaxed my focus and the scene faded back to the spinning triangles. I was thinking, "Wow! This is amazing!" I tightened my focus again and the triangles again transformed into the dancers on the dance floor. This time I tightened my focus so much that the entire bar scene faded in around me! I was back in the bar again!

My lockmold was again very strong, but again, I moved slowly and cautiously so as not to get too excited and fade out. I wondered if Eric was still here. I walked off the dance floor, through a neon lit hallway, back into the bar where I had seen Eric. And no shit - there he was in the same room! I was extremely lucid and I really had to fight to keep myself calm because I knew I would fade if I got too excited..."

4>

(The final example I will give of a surreal space is perhaps the most dramatic I have ever experienced. However, I failed fully to record this experience until 4 years after it had happened. Here is what I wrote in my journal the day I had the experience in 1988:)

""Laid there thinking/talking to myself, did hands trick and skipped/fell down/backwards. Landed by a gymnasium. Skipped to an acting stage (i.e. artificial, like it was a stage set) looking city. Got bored and left. Voided a bit. Explored four levels of physiological structure: 1. the meme bacteria, 2. swirling colors, eddy fluxes, 3. cells and proteins, 4. rock plateau with embedded gems and atom lattice. Skipped to 5th level and was in a city. Skipped into a room and talked to a girl. Various other things that I can't remember. Laid in focus 10 remembering then fell asleep."

(This is all I wrote originally in my journal. It was 4 years later that I elaborated on these brief notes when typing my journal into the computer. Below is what I remembered of this experience four years later. What we have here is a lesson in being lazy. I was too lazy to record this experience in detail, and, as you will see, I forgot significant parts of the experience. This is, in my mind, one of the most significant uses of anima that I ever have done. I was a fool to not record it in more detail. What I could remember when I entered my journal into the computer is:)

"...What I do recall very clearly is that, while I was in the midst of the meme bacteria level, I got the idea to shut my eyes, spin around rapidly, and pretend that I was shrinking. When I did this and opened my eyes up I was quite surprised to see that I was actually somewhere else! That I had or had not shrunk down I don't know absolutely, but then again, there is not one thing described in this journal that I have any absolute understanding of (other than the fact that this stuff did occur!). And what I saw when I opened my eyes was amazing. I was in the midst of a spectacular panorama of

swirling activity and spiraling colors. In the entry above I refer to this as "swirling colors, eddy fluxes". Even now I can remember some of the images of what I saw. At the time my impression was that I was watching the biochemical cycles inside my cells, but I was seeing them up close. The scene was staggering in its complexity. In this projection, I was floating amongst the images, floating surrounded by these color patterns. I remember that I was amazed, but baffled, and didn't understand in the least what I was looking at, other than that it was very beautiful and moving around too much to make out any definite structure.

At the time, during the projection, the main thing going through my mind was the new travel/skip technique I had just devised. Since, at this second level, which I had assumed to be nested inside of the meme bacteria level, I didn't really know how to make much sense of what I was seeing, I decided to try the same technique again. So, in the midst of all these swirling colors, I shut my eyes, started spinning around and once again pretended I was shrinking. Then I opened my eyes and again I was somewhere else! In the entry above I have the description of this third level as "cells and proteins". Unfortunately, at this point I don't remember a single image I saw at this level. Whatever it was though, it must have been things that reminded me of protein structure, which would mean coils and loops, or I wouldn't have written this in my journal.

I do remember clearly though what I was thinking at this level. I remember thinking to myself something along the lines of the following logic, "If I'm really looking at proteins, then I should be able to shrink down and actually see the individual atoms that the proteins are composed of." So I shut my eyes, spun around rapidly, and pretended to shrink even further. When I opened my eyes I was again at a new level and this I remember clearly even now as I type. I opened my eyes and I was standing on a rock ledge, and in this ledge were embedded little glistening jewels. I looked up and in front of me as far as I could see were little dots of light all lined up in a lattice pattern. "Are those atoms?" I wondered, "if they are, then why aren't they moving?" The ledge that was overlooking this lattice work was only about three feet high and I stepped off of it into the lattice sea of lights. I floated out into it, mostly confounded by what I was looking at. It was very still and quiet. The lights were simply embedded in the darkness, and they were not moving or anything, only sitting in place glowing softly. I remember these images clear as day. I floated through this panorama and became bored because it was the same thing in every direction I looked. I know I was trying to see things like Besant and Leadbeater described in Occult Chemistry. So I shut my eyes, spun around again, and pretended to shrink.

And again, I opened my eyes and was somewhere else! This time though I was standing in a city, and it felt very gloomy to me. It was misty and kind of dark. Things were colored, but pale, and mostly shadowy. I felt a little scared by this place. Far off in the distance I saw a creature running and it seemed to me to look like a wolf running like a man. I remember at this point thinking to myself, "I wonder if I'm on the lowest astral plane now? Maybe what happened is I started out at the meme level, shrunk deeper and deeper into the physical level, until I finally popped right out of the physical

level into the astral plane." That's what I thought when I was actually there seeing it first hand, and this is what I believe today."

(END OF ENTRIES)

So there you have it. We've now gone through a survey of what it's like on the other side of the veil, in the OOB realm. By any standard, what I have described here is only a fraction of what has been described. And moreover, what has been described here is obviously slanted by and limited by my own experiences in the OOB realm and my own interpretations of these experiences. I do, by all means, encourage everyone to read as much as they can about what life is like in the planes. You may find contradictory reports, you may find differing interpretations, but this is to be expected. The realm where OOBs occur is vast beyond anything we know or understand here in the physical world. It is truly important if you want to have as full an understanding as possible that you expose yourself to as many views as possible about the OOB/astral projection/ lucid dream experience. And, as always, you want to use YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE IN THESE REALMS, as your basis for interpreting the reports of others. Other people's reports are great for giving us ideas and for exposing us to possibilities, and for corroborating the things we experience out-of-body, but in the end, there is no substitute for personal, direct experience. I try here to show you doors. It is you who must pass

G. Things And People You Meet

We've discussed the things you can do and places you can go during an OOB, now I'd like to discuss the creatures you can meet during an OOB. In general you can break this topic down into two parts: 1. the nonhuman things you meet, and 2. the human things you meet. I will now discuss each of these in turn, beginning with the nonhuman things first.

1. Nonhuman Denizens Of The Planes

A number of the entries I have presented so far are examples of meeting nonhuman entities. I have described meeting the following "creatures": a talking rhino (entry 9 under the heading "Exercising psychic powers"), a friendly spirit (entry 4 under "Moving, Flying and the "Wind"), numerous ghouls, and describe meeting a number of people as well.

Basically, and this is commonly reported in the astral plane literature, there are any number of nonhuman entities you may meet. Such entities include "intelligent" animals, spirits of all types, fairy folk, strange monsters, ghouls, zombies, rotting bodies and pretty much anything else you can imagine. These entities may be friendly, hostile or anything in between. They may be completely indifferent to your presence.

About all I can say in terms of meeting nonhuman entities is that you want to try to ascertain a number of factors. First, you want to try to determine if the entity displays volition. That is, does the entity act of its own accord? If it does not, then it is possible you are seeing a thought-form.

I will give an example of meeting a thought-form below. Second, try to communicate with the entity if you can. It can't hurt you to try. Finally, if the entity appears hostile, don't worry

about it, as we saw with the creature that tried to capture me in the void (FILE 9, entry 3 under "Life in the void"), the situation was basically harmless. I will also present entries below where I confront hostile nonhuman entities so you can see what I have done in such circumstances.

Let me now present some entries.

1>

(Note that this is part of the entry in number 13 under "Exercising psychic powers". Here I merely said: (I then met a monster in the cave, which lunged at me and caused me to lose my lockmold...). I will now present this meeting with the monster. This is a good example of illustrating how a threatening encounter, though startling, is harmless.)

"I was standing back in the mist filled cave wondering what the heck I had just seen (as described in entry 13). The dangling objects caught my attention and I hovered up to get a closer look at them. They appeared to be highly colored paper mache tubes suspended from strings, real reminiscent of Chinese artwork. I focused on them in the same fashion I did above and their appearance changed. Now they looked like little creatures dangling from strings! They had bodies that were small in proportion to their heads. They had little bead-like eyes and long tube-like beaks. They had short little dangling arms with little detailed hands that reminded me of mice hands. I figured that they must be some kind of elementals. I touched them and felt them. But the focus broke again and they reverted back to colored paper-mache tubes.

I looked around wondering if there was a mirror. Inspecting the shelves against the cave wall, I saw a mirror about 10 feet up on the cave wall! (No real surprise, huh?) I flew up to it and looked at myself. What I saw looked like a horror story version of myself. It was me, but my skin was all white and flaked, my eyes were completely white and chalky looking, and my eye sockets were deep as if my face was just a skull. I thought to myself, "Oh my!". But I wasn't unusually startled. This is not the first time I had seen weird images of myself in astral mirrors. I continued staring at the image and it then transformed into a normal image of myself. I thought that was interesting. I turned and looked around the cave, then turned back to the mirror. I saw the same thing; first the horror image, which then transformed to the normal image. I hovered down to land on the cave floor wondering if there was any significance to these mirror images.

I was staring forward into the mists at the cave entrance and saw an outline of a humanoid form there. "What the hell is that?" I wondered. I became a bit trepid. The image was moving towards me and I focused on it with my new focusing method. And boy, did I get a surprise again! What I saw was a ghastly looking monster ready to lunge at me! I got a good glimpse of what it looked like. Its face had the same quality as my horror mirror image; white chalky skin, pure white eyes. Its mouth was agape, fangs protruding from its jaws. It seemed to be over 6 feet tall, humanoid, and was

unquestionably bigger than me. It had its arms extended to grab at me, and it had huge claws on its hands. It seemed to be wrapped up like a mummy.

I backed up into the air, more disturbed than scared, and tried to pass through the back of the cave wall, but to no avail. There was no way I could shoot past it, it was too close and would grab me. And then, it also shot up in the air and was coming at me. I at least wasn't panicking and the thing lunged at me with a loud growl. At the last moment it dawned on me, "What the hell can this thing do to me anyway? After all, I'm in my astral body.

It can't hurt me." The monster bounced on me and grabbed me. The shock of its impact was enough to cause my lockmold to break. I was back on my bed...."

2>

(Here's another example of a monster lunging at me. This time it's a ghoul. Again, you don't have to fear these things.)

"...I turned away from the mirror wondering what my appearance meant and I noticed that my window which has a fan in it on the physical plane did not have a fan in it now. But then I noticed that there was somebody or something standing out in the backyard. I looked and it was a ghoul! There was a ghoul creature standing outside my room! It was wearing a ragged yellow shirt and ripped red shorts. It had long stringy, dirty gray hair, and looked like a corpse in an advanced state of decay. God, now I was really wondering what the hell was going on! Not only did I look weird, but now there was some astral slime in my very own backyard.

It didn't strike me during the projection, but what was weird was how the ghoul was positioned in my backyard and the angle I was viewing him from out my window. He was standing at the corner of my room on the outside, with its side facing in my direction and its front facing towards the street and its back facing into the backyard. What I didn't realize until I woke up and wrote this is that there is no way I could see someone if they were standing in this position on the physical plane. I just tried to look out my window from where I was standing in my room in the projection, and you simply can't see that corner of the house. I have to put my face right up to the screen and turn my head to see that position from my window. But in the projection I could see that position perfectly standing back a few feet from the window. Geometrically, this would mean that the corner of my room was less than 90 degrees in my projection on whatever plane I was on. Either this or that I could very naturally see around a 90 degree corner! And I know that I was NOT seeing through the wall. I saw the zombie through the window. Whatever the case, the geometry of space was definitely very different in my projection than it is on the physical plane.

So there I was looking at the ghoul wondering what I should do. It was just standing there at the corner of the house and I didn't know if it was conscious, or if it knew I was looking at it or what. But my curiosity got the best of me and I figured I'd dive out my other window that was up over its head and see just what it looked like up

close. I figured, hell, this is the astral plane, and the thing can't hurt me anyway so what have I got to lose? So I dove through my window. I passed through the window and there I was in front of it. I tried to look at its face, but its face was just a blur and I couldn't focus on it. But it looked like a dried up corpse with long dirty, stringy hair and its ripped up clothes. Then an instant after I jumped out the window, it lunged at me. I remember that the thing growled as it lunged. It startled the shit out of me and I pulled myself awake. I sat there in bed wondering what it all meant. Was that thing still outside on another plane? Did it wander off again? Why was something like that in our backyard? Was it just passing through? Did this household emit vibes that attracted it? Why did my body materialize into such a deformed shape? I didn't know what to think. After I awoke, I wasn't scared or spooked or anything like that, just very curious. I've know enough about this projecting now to realize that nothing can hurt me out there except myself and I never need to fear anything. Wrote this entry."

3>

(Here's a description of some strange creatures I met that seemed to have their own volition, but didn't seem too intelligent. It is my suspicion that these were some type of fairy-folk.)

"Was dreaming in my old room at Ma's house. I knew I was going to go into it. I fell off my bed and flew up. I was looking out my (old) bedroom window over Ma's backyard. I flew through the window effortlessly. I was up over Ma's backyard. I could feel the wind whipping past me. I was glad to be back. Flew around a bit then went straight up. Blacked out at about one quarter mile up. Was in the void, but I flew downward anyway. I regained my sight but didn't recognize where I was. I wanted to experiment so I hovered in the air and imagined I was at Dad's house. I wanted to materialize there. It didn't work, or if it did I couldn't tell because I blacked out again. I remembered what I had read in Greene's book about going into space, so I decided I was going to try to fly to the moon. I flew upwards and imagined I was at the moon. I was still in the void, and I didn't really know where I was, or where I was going, but after flying upwards for some time I tried to regain my lockmold. I concentrated on trying to perceive around me in the void, and I started to materialize somewhere. I was standing in a clearing in a misty old forest. I thought to myself, "This is the moon? It doesn't look like the moon." I remember a moss covered fallen tree at my feet, mist creeping across the ground, yellow dead grass. My vision wasn't perfect, the lockmold was shaky, I couldn't see into my peripheral vision. I heard a weird goosing noise in front of me. It sounded like little babies laughing in a demented way. I looked up and saw little people coming at me. I became frightened a little bit, but I was as equally curious. The goosing noises were coming from them and it was creepy.

They were ugly little creatures- gray purple skin, black matted hair on the tops of their heads, about 1 and 1/2 feet tall, stout little bodies with pudgy arms and legs, and pitch black eyes. They were wearing what looked like rags about their groins.

They approached me with their arms outstretched trying to touch me. I was frightened as much as I was repulsed. I said "let me go!", as they were now grabbing at me. They weren't hostile though, they only seemed to be curious. I looked one of them distinctly in the face and it stared back up at me and seemed to smile- though it was an empty and non intelligent smile. I began to lose my lockmold and felt myself fading away. Could feel myself in my physical body again. Could see hypnogogic images behind my closed eyelids. It looked like a duck staring at me-but I really don't know what it was, it wasn't moving though. What was really unique though is that the image was undulating like: (drawing in my notes). It looked like the undulations produced by dropping two rocks in the water. The bottom undulation was covering some type of landscape. Lost the image and woke up."

4>

(Here's an example of meeting a thought-form. In this case, it was a thought-form of Superman! Thought-forms have no volition at all and often look like mannequins.)

"...I was laying on my bed again, but I still felt my feet tipped upwards higher than my head. I was still a little afraid but I began tipping and sliding backwards again. I saw the green and purple spiral motion again, but this time I slid quickly though it. Next I recall, I was floating in a great darkness, but before me was a structure that looked to be made up of passages of flags or curtains draping downwards. As I got closer the passages seemed to form a maze. There was a figure floating at the entrance to this maze and as I got closer, I realized it was Superman! But Superman looked like a toy doll, or a mannequin and he didn't look real at all. The expression on his face was completely immobile and looked like it was made out of plastic. I asked him if he was real, but I got no answer. Then I figured it was probably just a thought-form. I drifted past Superman into the maze of hanging flags. I noticed that the Superman thought-form was following me, but I didn't really care. I studied these flags and noticed that each one was of very specific colors. The colors seemed to be laid out on a black velvet background. Then it dawned on me that the colors that each flag was made up of was identical to the colors of a particular superhero's costume! I saw one that was mostly blue and red with a little yellow; that was Superman. Then there was one of red and blue with black in it; that was Spiderman. There was another one of yellow and red - and that was Ironman. As I stared at these I realized that they weren't really flags like I had supposed. They were more like strips of black velvet with colors laid out on them. The texture of the colors was very similar to the texture of colors on a flag (i.e. like dyed cloth)..."

5>

(Here is an interesting encounter I had with a giant minotaur. I do not know if this creature was a thought form or not. It seemed to display volition, but its behavior

was highly repetitious, which makes me suspect this creature may have been a creation of my subconscious mind. At any rate, the following adventure is kind of comical. I suspect there is a lot of personal symbolism in this projection.)

"...I had a false awakening. I awoke in bed, not realizing that I wasn't in my real bedroom. I was very excited about this adventure and my first thought was, "Wow! I have to call Rob and Joey and tell them about this projection." For some reason I thought it was mid-afternoon and I could get a hold of them on the phone. Then I looked over at the digital clock to see what time it was. But I couldn't read what time it was because I could see about twenty different times displayed at once, fading successively backwards. And I could also see the gears spinning around inside of the clock. "Goddamn!" I thought to myself, "I'm still projecting!"

Still, I tried to read the time anyway. It seemed to say 6:47, but I was simply seeing too many numbers at once to be sure. But I knew for sure I was still projecting. I looked around. I was in a bare bedroom, with only my mattress and the clock. I seemed to be in an apartment. The door was open and went off into a hallway, and there was a window on the wall of the hall.

I got up out of the bed and realized that my lockmold still felt incredibly stable, solid and wide awake. I walked out into the hall and looked out the window. Through the window I saw that I was quite a few stories off the ground, and there was an unfamiliar city off in the distance. I decided to fly about and explore. I passed very easily through the window and could even feel that weak tugging feeling as I passed through the window.

I was now hovering in the air just outside. I could see that I was definitely about five stories up. It felt like sunset was just around the corner and the city lights were sparkling off into the distance. Beyond the city I could see countryside. Then I looked directly below me and got an incredible shock. Here I am hovering five stories up in the air, but down below me on the ground is a gigantic creature that looks like a centaur! It was easily three stories high. I freaked out! I was just gonna fly away and hope that it didn't see me. I tried to fly but I couldn't, it felt like I was locked in place.

And then, as if in response to my desire to split, it saw me.

It looked up at me and pointed at me and said in a low, deep, rumbling voice, "Excuse me. Oh excuse me, sir, but I must ask a favor of you." I couldn't believe it, the thing's voice sounded like a low thunder filling the air.

"Oh my God!" I thought to myself, "this is like something out of Jack and the Beanstalk. Wait till everyone hears about this one!" I was actually quite excited about the prospect of being able to brag about having met this creature. Still, I tried to ignore the thing and jet away, but I couldn't seem to get any leverage to move. As I was trying to pull myself away, the creature yelled up at me again, "Excuse me, sir, but I must ask a most important favor. Could you please assist me?"

At this point, a gust of wind came along and grabbed me and carried me up, away from the creature, and around to the other side of the building. As I went higher

up, I got an even better view of my surroundings, and I was much more interested in exploring these than in dealing with this unknown giant below me. Then I heard it yell again, "Sir, I said I need your assistance." I couldn't see it at this point, but its voice was like thunder. Then it riveted up into the air and spiraled around the building and began to follow me through the air.

I wasn't scared by this creature. I actually felt bothered by it. I didn't have any sense that it wanted to hurt me. But I was actually being pulled by many desires -- what should I do?

All the while I was looking around at where I was at and I was in awe of the incredible beauty of the place I was in. The sun seemed to be coming up over the horizon behind the city, and the city itself glistened like so many jewels far below me. And once I got around to the other side of the building, off in the distance the sky was filled by huge billowing clouds draped across the sky in wave after wave. And if things hadn't been dramatic and spectacular enough to this point in the projection, I realized as I was looking at the clouds that there was a city built right into the clouds! It was like a fairy tale -- a castle built into the clouds!

My mind was spinning. I was attempting to assess what actual subplane I was on to encounter so many fantastic things. And I was wondering what this giant creature wanted from me, and how I could just get away from it. And once I saw the castle on the clouds, I decided that was where I wanted to go. The wind was carrying me in that direction. The clouds themselves seemed to be getting bigger and bigger, dwarfing everything else in my view. They were beautiful as the rising (setting)? sun was shining off them, making them look like some gorgeous pastel painting. There was an incredible vividness to everything; very real, but not like the physical plane. Everything seemed almost like claymation. But paradoxically, even though I was moving in the direction of the city in the clouds, it didn't seem like I was getting any closer to it. I began feeling frustrated that the wind wouldn't have enough power to get me to the city in the clouds. Then the creature, which had been flying after me, caught up to me and was now following alongside me in the air. "Shit, I guess there's no way I can avoid dealing with this guy," I thought, resigning myself to my obvious fate.

"Sir," it said, rather impatiently, "I asked if you may assist me on a rather important matter." It was funny how formally and fairy-tale like it spoke. The centaur, flying along side me now, looked smaller up close, about twice as big as a horse. And it didn't really look like a centaur anymore. It seemed to be some type of a giant that was riding on a headless horse.

Staring ahead towards the beautiful city on the clouds, I spoke to it, "OK? What do you want?"

It replied, "Sir, I need to find the whereabouts of a very important person."

"OK. Who is it? Tell me who you are looking for, and I'll help you find them," I answered.

But it kept rambling in its thunder voice, "Sir, would you please give me your assistance?"

Now I was getting impatient with it. "Who are you looking for?" I kept asking. But he just kept asking for my assistance, and all the while, as I was getting closer to the clouds, I was getting no closer to the beautiful city on the clouds. Next thing I knew, I was back in my physical body, laying in my bed.

This time I was awake for real. I looked at the clock. It was 6:00. Only an hour had passed. I laid quite in awe at this unexpected adventure while I was gathering up my memories."

6>

(Here is an example of me meeting strange fish creatures. I do not know what these creatures were, but I was afraid of them and responded accordingly.)

"...When I stopped falling backwards, I had landed in a rather large room that seemed familiar to me, though I couldn't place why. The floor looked like it was made up of piles of long (5-10 feet) bean bag chairs and they were colored in blue and white, green and white, or red and white swirl patterns. This floor was lumpy, not at all smooth. When I had stopped from sliding backwards, I had stopped with my face pushed up against some kind of transparent wall that reminded me of an aquarium. I was looking through this wall into what seemed like a dark, watery medium. Then, something on the other side seemed to get up from the mud and swim away off into the darkness. This startled me and I pulled myself up. I stood up and stepped backwards away from the wall, but the colored "beanbag" that I had stepped on got up and swam out from underneath me! The floor was alive! This really scared me and I started to feel claustrophobic. I hovered up into the air, and this "beanbag" was actually a fish-like creature, maybe about 7 feet long, colored in red and white swirls, and it was now swimming around through the air in the room. I hovered around trying to avoid it. It swam up to me as if to investigate me and it circled around me. I was too afraid to move. But then it got close enough to me and I punched its face. It swam over towards the other side of the room. I looked around me trying to get a better sense of where I was at and it was then I really noticed that the whole floor was made of these creatures! I was very afraid that they were all going to awake and start swimming around. Then another one did get up and start swimming around in the room. I flew up and hit this one too, but my movements were slow and jerky. I was very scared. I got a good look at the room I was in. It was circular, with a diameter of maybe 50 feet. The walls were transparent and there was a lot of motion and activity going on beyond the walls. I couldn't make out anything definite beyond the transparent walls, but it all seemed very biological. The two fish were swimming about, though keeping their distance from me. Then I faded and was back in my physical body...."

(END OF ENTRIES)

Well, looking at the above entries, I wonder how justified I am in telling you not be scared, given that I **was** frightened in many of the episodes I reported above! Still, in the years I have been projecting, I have obviously survived all of these encounters, and during this time have learned not to be scared of the nonhuman entities I meet. Perhaps the scariest aspect of all this is the fact of the unknown. We are always scared in the face of the unknown, and most of my above reactions reflect this reflex. I can assure you though that as you get more proficient at projecting, and more familiar with the OOB realm, you will become less and less afraid of what you encounter there. So, if you like, you can build on my experience and simply accept that you do not have to fear things you encounter in the OOB realm. Otherwise, you can go through the same learning process I did. Whatever the case, the bottom line is never be discouraged and try to keep an explorer's attitude about your projections. When you project, you are entering the unknown and there is nothing you can do about this fact. As you transform the unknown into the known, your responses to the OOB realm will transform too.

2. Meeting People: Dead Verses Dreamers

Meeting people in the OOB realm is one of the most fascinating and eye-opening aspects of the projection experience. Now, there are a variety of aspects when it comes to meeting people during your OOBs. First, some authors report that you can observe people who are on the physical plane while you are out-of-body. Monroe for example makes this claim. In my own personal experiences I have never been able to do this, except perhaps once during my very first astral projection and a couple other times that were, however, very ambiguous. So, if it is your intention to spy on people while you are out-of-body, good luck cause you're on your own - I have no experience with this to share with you!

When I meet people during my projections, they are actually on the subplane I am on. And, like nonhuman entities, people you meet in the planes will respond to you in all manner of ways, from friendly to hostile to ignoring you.

Now, theoretically, if you accept the occult viewpoint, there are two main classes of people you can meet during an OOB: dreamers and deceased or "discarnate" humans. I think I have met both during different projections. Of course, it is very difficult to verify if someone you meet during an OOB is a dreamer or a discarnate person. If you can get a name or address or phone number from the person, then you are doing very well and have some kind of evidence to determine if the person you met does or ever existed here on our physical plane. I will get more into the idea of questioning the people you meet during an OOB below.

Now, I suspect that there are different subplanes for dreamers and discarnate humans. I think that there is a "dreamers current" in the subplanes close to our physical plane, and it is on this "dream current" that most of us go every night when we dream. On the other hand, I think that the regions inhabited by discarnate people are "farther away" from the physical plane. Living people exude a different type of energy than do discarnate people, and as oil does not mix with water, I think that living people (i.e. dreamers) tend not to mix with the deceased, except under certain special conditions. For example, we have all heard stories of people meeting deceased relatives in

their dreams. In this case, a strong emotional tie between the individuals either "pulls" the dreamer to the regions where discarnate humans dwell, or "pulls" the deceased person to the regions where dreamers dwell. If a strong enough force, or emotional resonance, is exerted, one could conceivably bring the deceased person's aura very close to the physical plane, in which case one may see ghosts. This latter idea is the basis of seances and spiritualism where, 100 years ago, it was fashionable to attempt to communicate with deceased relatives.

Now, how can you tell a deceased person from a dreamer? Again, there is no sure method to do so. It is only in extreme cases that you might be able to make a reasonable guess. You might think that by becoming lucid during a dream that the people around you are dreamers too, and this is a reasonable presumption. If you meet people in your OOBes who are dressed in fashions from another era, this may be a clue that it is a deceased person. Likewise, if you find yourself in a region that looks like a past era, it is conceivable that the people there (if there are people there) are the deceased who lived in that era. However, there are simply no guarantees about this.

The only way you can be sure you met a dreamer is by getting their name, phone number or address, remembering these upon waking and contacting the person here on the physical plane. Next, you will have to find out what this person looks like. If you can actually do this, and the person you contact here on the physical plane is indeed the person you met in your OOBes, then you can say pretty much for sure that this person was a dreamer. Actually, if you can bring a valid name and phone number back from a projection with you, you've done something quite amazing. I've never succeeded at doing this though I try every chance I get.

I have never done this for reasons I will get to shortly.

To be sure you met a deceased person you will have to go through a similar process; get the person's name, the general era in which they lived, where they lived, and if you can, some facts about their life. Then, again, presuming you can remember all this information upon waking, if you can verify this information, then you can say with a high degree of certainty that you met a deceased person.

Now, the above methods are only valid for people that are strangers. Different factors seem to be operating if you meet someone you know during an OOBes. In many of my projections I have seen and interacted with my close friends. Throughout these notes I refer to a fellow named J.C., or John, and this is a close friend of mine who answers to both names. Numerous times I have met J.C. in my projections, yet I don't know what to make of my having met him during an OOBes. In some cases he was awake here on the physical plane when I met him in my OOBes. In other cases he was sleeping here on the physical plane when I met him in one of my OOBes. I don't understand what is going on when I meet J.C. during an OOBes while he is awake here on the physical plane. Am I only conjuring up his image in my OOBes (i.e. creating a thought-form of him)? That is, when I meet J.C. is he merely a hallucination within my OOBes? Alternatively, am I meeting a part of his subconscious mind in my OOBes? I do not know the answers to these questions. I know that there is no apparent correlation between what he is doing while he is awake and what he was doing, apparently at the same time when I have met him in my OOBes. Likewise, the times I've met him when he was in bed sleeping here on the physical plane, he has never once woken up and remembered meeting me in my OOBes.

So, unlike other authors who claim to meet people they know during their OOBES and later get confirmation of this meeting from the person here on the physical plane, I have never had such confirmation. I do not have the slightest clue what is going on when I meet people I know within one of my OOBES. This is why I said above that the methods I suggest to use if you want to prove a person is a dreamer or deceased person will only work with strangers. If you can meet a stranger during an OOBES, then later, here in the physical world, actually confirm that person does or did exist here in the physical plane, then you have gotten very strong evidence of meeting a bona fide person during your OOBES.

However, I have had three experiences that are very close to being confirmations that I really did interact with a specific person during one of my OOBES. In the first case, I had a long OOBES in one of those resting places for deceased people that I mentioned earlier. While I was in this "Rehab Center", I found a friend of mine whom I knew from about 10 years prior. This friend of mine, whose name was Steve, had muscular dystrophy (and was confined to a wheelchair) and we were very good friends in junior high school. I lost contact with Steve during high school because I moved away and have never contacted him since. The only time I have seen Steve since junior high was in a projection I had in 1987. When I saw Steve in the projection, he was completely dazed. He was in a complete stupor (I will talk more about people being in a stupor immediately below), and he did not recognize me. But it was Steve, in his wheelchair, looking very much like I remembered him. In the projection, I told him that he didn't need to be in a wheelchair because he was in the astral plane, and he could do anything he wanted, but he didn't seem to hear me.

I then introduced him to a couple other guys that were in the room with us who were in wheelchairs too. These guys were much more lucid than Steve and they took to him. The three of them then wheeled off out of the room and I went on to other adventures in the projection.

Well, it was maybe a year after this projection (1988) that I had found out that Steve had died in 1983. All I could figure is I found Steve in the after-death state.

The second instance that I had during a projection that seemed to possess an uncanny validity also involved a deceased friend of mine. One of my very close musician friends committed suicide in 1987. About 6 months after his death, I saw him in a projection. He was complaining about how much the world sucked. He and I got in a big argument and I told him that just because he was dead didn't mean anything, he was still being an asshole and that he'd better quit feeling so sorry for himself and get his act together.

In my mind, this was a very legitimate meeting. My friend, who obviously was so desolate that he took his life, had the same attitudes after death. For whatever reason, I was drawn to him in one of my projections, and I gave him my two cents worth! Whatever the case, I feel I really did meet him in the after-death state while I was out-of-body.

Finally, my third close call was when I met one of my best friends during a projection. I came upon this friend, whose name is Tim, while I was flying through a strange city. Tim was sitting on the ledge of a building and naturally I was surprised to see him. I went over to him and started to talk to him. I knew that it was early Sunday morning and chances were good that Tim was home sleeping on the physical plane. I decided I would see if I could help him become lucid so that when he woke, he would recall our meeting.

I told him that we were projecting and that we were in the world of dreams. At first he responded as if in a daze, but I started shaking him and kept telling him to wake up (i.e. become lucid). Finally, he seemed to become himself, which is to say, he started to act lucid. I then showed him how to fly and we proceeded to explore the city we were in. I kept pointing things out to him, telling him to remember all we were seeing so that when he woke up he would remember it. I also kept telling him to call me as soon as he woke up. Well, we were together for a long time in the projection and I kept reminding him to call me when he woke up. Eventually, I lost him and continued with my projection. I woke up straight from my projection and it was about 11:00 AM. And then, within minutes of waking up from my projection, Tim called me! For real - on the physical plane! I was very excited, but didn't say anything to him about the projection. I asked him how long he had been awake, and he said he just woke up, which meant that he really had been sleeping at the same time I was projecting. I then asked him if he had any dreams that he could remember.

He couldn't remember anything though, but he said he had an urge to call me!

So, these three episodes were the closest I have ever come to having a meeting with a specific person during an OOB verified. Now, if you were a hard-core skeptic, you'd probably think I was grasping at straws, but, then again, if you are a hard-core skeptic, you have never even astral projected, so I'd ignore you.

Still, in spite of these three provocative episodes, the fact that I have never been able, with any absolute certainty, to confirm the meetings I have with people during my OOBs makes me leery of people who make such claims, and also makes me question just how far we can take the projection experience as occurring in some kind of "objective" world. However, because I have not done this does not mean it is impossible. To think such a thing would be completely foolish. Lots of people can do things I cannot do. So, the bottom line here is that I am in no position to pass judgment on people's claims of meeting and verifying meetings with other living (or deceased) people. I still remain open minded that it is possible to interact with other people (living or not) during an OOB, and am constantly testing and looking for ways to verify the validity of my meetings with people, friends or strangers, during my own OOBs.

a) The Character of People In OOBs

Now, to explain what I was saying above about these friends of mine being in a daze, one of the most interesting things I have observed when meeting other humans in my OOBs is generally how completely out of it they are. What I mean by this is that, when I meet people in my OOBs, these people, more often than not, act like they are in a daze. In other words, they are NOT lucid. I will present a number of examples of this from my journal. In fact, when I meet a person who responds to me the way a person would respond to me here on the physical plane, I am very surprised. Let me elaborate on what I am saying here in more detail.

When I meet people during an OOB I ask them a number of questions. This has become a habit with me and I strongly recommend that you do this also. Here are some of the questions I will ask people I meet during my OOBs:

1. What is your name?

2. Where are we? What city is this?
3. Did you know we are in the dream world right now?
4. What year is it?
5. Are you dead or are you dreaming?

You have to imagine what you would think if someone came up to you out of the blue and just started asking you these questions. If someone came up to you and said, "Hey, we are dreaming right now", you'd think they were nuts or just being silly at the least. If someone asked you your name, or the date, or what city you were in, you would be able to answer this immediately. Well, the people I have met in my projections generally CANNOT answer these simple questions. I think this is one of the most amazing discoveries I have made in my OOBEx explorations. That is to say, PEOPLE IN THE OOBEx REALM ARE GENERALLY **NOT** AS LUCID AS PEOPLE IN THE PHYSICAL PLANE. You will be doing very well if you get yourself into a position where you can either confirm or refute this statement.

A typical scenario of me meeting a person in one of my OOBEx is as follows: I approach the person and they may or may not respond to my presence. If they do respond, it is a rather feeble recognition that I am there. I will then talk to the person, and, more often than not, ask the questions I listed above. And, more often than not, the person will NOT know their name, will NOT know where they are at, and generally speaking, will respond to me as if they are in a daze. Examples of this are below.

Now, another thing I've learned to do is the following, and I will give examples if this below too. Sometimes I will be SLY with the person and not let on that I know I am astral projecting. I will approach the person and interact with them in a matter of fact way, without any indication that I know I am projecting. Whatever is going on, I will just go along with it. Then, out of the blue I will say something to the effect, "Hey, wake up, we are in the dream world; This is all a dream." Often, in such circumstances, the person looks at me as if I am joking or I am a nut. And then, I will float up about five feet off the ground and say, "Ha! Can you do this in the physical world?". When I do this, I often elicit a reaction of surprise from the person I am talking to. They no longer think I am joking! Often they are genuinely surprised. However, depending on the circumstances, they will either fall back into their catatonic stupor, or I will bring them into some kind of adventure or another. Another thing I do when I meet people during my projections is to teach them how to fly. The overwhelming majority of people you meet in your projections have no idea where they are at and what they can do. When you meet someone during an OOBEx, you can teach them to fly. It's easy, it's fun, and, to some extent or another, you are helping that person out.

Also, you will find situations where you can console people. You will find people who are scared or angry and violent, and, simply because you are lucid and know your "powers", you can often help mellow out both types of people. I will give examples of this kind of behavior too.

Finally, before I start presenting journal entries, I want to comment about one last aspect of meeting people during your OOBEx. This involves trying to tell a person you meet that you are NOT in the physical world. This is the strangest thing to try to do. A number of times in my

projections, while I am trying to tell someone that we are in the astral plane, it dawns on me how weird it really is to try to communicate this idea to someone else DURING A PROJECTION. See, we don't have such a problem here in the physical world. It's totally trivial if I come up to you and say, "Hey, we are in the physical world right now, and we are NOT in the dream world". You'd look at me and say, "yea, so what? big deal!" I mean, it is so obvious to us that we ARE in this physical world that we don't even think of any other possible way it could be. But imagine you are standing in the world of dreams trying to tell somebody that you are in the dream world and NOT in the physical world. It's almost paradoxical trying to do this. Don't forget, most of the people you meet out-of-body are NOT lucid. They have no idea where they are at in the first place, and then you come along and try to tell them that there is this place called the "physical plane" and that is where you come from, but that is not where you and this other person happen to be at the moment. They generally do not get it. All I can say is, if you get the chance, try to tell someone you meet in a projection that you are not in the physical world.

So, let me summarize this section:

1. People you meet during OOBES can potentially be: in the physical plane, or dreamers, or deceased. However, it is very difficult to determine which is the case.
2. People you meet during OOBES are generally in a catatonic daze. YOU will be lucid, but they will NOT be lucid.
3. Question people for as much information as you can.
4. Ask the kinds of questions I have listed above; simple questions. This will get you two types of information: you will get information that could help verify if the person you meet exists on the physical plane, and you will get information that will allow you to gauge how lucid this person is.
5. Teach people how to fly, or help them if they need help.
6. Try to tell the people you meet during a projection that you are not in the physical world.
- 7.

OK, let me give you some examples from my journal illustrating what I've said above.

1>

(In this episode, from my very first full-scale projection, I had planned to go to J.C.'s room if I actually left my body. Our plan was that whoever got out-of-body first would go to the other's room and see what they were doing. And that's exactly what I did. Turns out in this case, what I saw actually happened, only my projection occurred about 3 hours after the events I saw. This was a fourth case that was a type of confirmation of the validity of what I saw, though this case too, like the other three, is ambiguous.)

"...I remembered to try to go to John's room as we had planned... I stepped out into the hallway. It felt a little eerie, but familiar recognition made me feel good and only fed my enthusiasm to push on. I pushed forward about two feet, and instantly appeared

going up the stairs to the third floor. I didn't quite think this at that point, but basically I quantized through space! I was three or so steps from the top so I made my way up. There was John's closet which was in the hallway in front of his room. Again the recognition filled me with enthusiasm. I turned and looked at his door and it was closed. I did my new trick and looked away, then looked back, and it was open.

And there was John standing there facing toward me talking, and Gregor sitting on John's bed staring at the wall. I was so surprised that our experiment had worked that I very enthusiastically rushed into the room shouting, "J.C., Hey J.C.! I did it!". This was very strange because, as I yelled, my voice seemed to come out of me in slow motion as if someone were playing a 78 record at 16 speed. But at the same time, I was hearing this, I was hearing another "me" actually shouting out these things normally. But this voice sounded far in the background and behind the slower voice. As I'm realizing all this, meanwhile I'm rushing into the room trying desperately to get J.C.'s attention. But he doesn't notice me. I'm talking and shouting at him and trying to grab and shake him. But to my surprise my arms pass right through him as I try to grab him. I notice that John seems to be talking about something that quite enthuses him but his back is to Gregor, and Gregor doesn't seem to be interested anyway, he's just sitting on John's bed, smoking a cigarette and staring up at the wall.

It occurs to me to try to look at the clock and see what time it is. The clock seemed to read 12:56, but I wasn't sure because it was blurry and not quite legible, no matter how hard I would try to focus on it. Then, I seemed, for no apparent reason at all, to completely lose interest in the situation. I turned and left the room.

Then I went back out into the hall, I looked into John's closet. There was now a window right in the middle of his closet. In the window was a pink rainbow swirling mist that enchanted me enough to want to dive right into it. I thought to myself, "Well, I've only gotten this far by pushin' on ahead!" And so I plunged into this glimmering, enchanting window. I really don't recall well what happened to me after this point, other than it really freaked me out in a very pleasant way..."

2>

(Earlier, I presented me trying to pass through a wall [entry 7 under "b. Moving through walls"].

Here are the events leading to that. This was the first time I met a "dazed" person during a projection and it was a little child. Note here also how I forgot the children's names upon waking. It is NOT easy carrying information from the OOBE state back to the waking state.)

When I regained my vision I was standing on steps leading down into what appeared to be a basement laundromat.

It was very distinct - a perfect lockmold, and I felt very conscious. Yellow painted walls, pipes on the ceiling washing machines and wash tubs up and down the room. It was a corridor extending for about 300 feet. There were various other turns

to my right but I did not explore these. To my left was a wall with windows at the top that seemed to be at ground level.

All of a sudden, a little colored boy about 10 comes walking out of nowhere. He's wearing a blue parka but looks quite normal otherwise. I said "Hello. I love you" but he didn't seem to hear me. I thought "Wow! He must be sleeping" (that he was dead never entered my mind). I said "Who are you? What are you doing?" He still didn't seem to hear me even though he was looking right at me. I said "Who are you?" quite loudly in his face. He turned dazedly and started walking away from me and he was mumbling his name. I don't remember what he said, I forgot since I woke up.

During the projection I heard it and it seemed to be quite important to me at that point. But he seemed uninterested in me and he disappeared into what I thought was a bathroom. I stood waiting for him and out of the same door comes a little white boy, about 10 or 11 years old. He had reddish brown hair in a bowl cut, wearing a green shirt and blue jeans. He was much more receptive. He came out and saw me and said "Where am I? I'm scared here". I said "Don't worry, you are only sleeping and you'll wake up soon. I asked him his name and he told me right away. But it seemed to "blend" with the other boy's name and I just can't remember. Then the little colored boy comes out with us. "How can we get out of here seems to be the mutual thought of all of us. All I could see as an escape route were the windows to our left. The windows were sunk back and about 7 feet off the ground. There were a series of pipes blocking the way so I hovered up into the air..."

3>

(Another dramatic example of how UNLUCID people are that you meet in projections. Notice too here in this entry something I have found; that it is very difficult for me to read things during projections.)

"...(I was flying through a sea of faces) As I was flying through the faces, I passed the face of a very beautiful woman and her beauty caught my attention so much that I reversed my motion until I came upon her face again. I stared very hard trying to focus my lockmold and I began to materialize again! And there she was standing in front of me, in the flesh! We seemed to be in the middle of an old west town and she was in line at the theater or something. She was wearing a dark business outfit with green eye shadow and deep red lipstick. She didn't look as beautiful now as her face appeared in the sea of faces. I was standing there staring at her intensely and she looked at me and asked "Can I help you?" I asked her what city we were in, what is her name, what State is this. She looked at me pensively, then a look of confusion swept her features. Then, as a couple of policemen entered the street, she pointed to them and said "Why don't you ask them"? And she hurried off into the building we were in front of. I seem to recall her asking "Do you think I'm beautiful?" either when I first saw her or as she was leaving. At any rate, I went up to the policemen and asked them the same questions. And I got the same response! The cop I was addressing looked at his partner and they both shrugged their shoulders. I noticed a sign in front of

a building and got the idea to go try to read it so I thanked the cops and hurried off. The sign was on some steps leading into a building and I got the sense that it was some kind of official sign. I tried to read it but had a very difficult time. I could not get it into focus that easily. All I could make out were the letters "OR", which for some reason I interpreted to mean Oregon, and the statement "Cheyan Country". At that moment I thought to myself "This sign is senseless. These dead people decorate their landscape, but there is no function for this sign it's just a decoration". I gave up my attempt to read the sign and walked back down the steps somewhat shaken up. I noticed my hands were in my pockets and thought to myself that I was glad I had materialized with clothes on this time. I wondered if the cops would have noticed had I been naked.

I walked into the street again and tried to survey my surroundings. The sign gave me a definite impression of the Old West. The cops looked thoroughly modern though. The woman in green looked like someone from the late nineteen hundreds. The city itself seemed to be a cross between the 1920's and the 1950's in terms of the appearances of the buildings. The buildings were at most 5 stories high, some of yellow or red (like a rose) brick, others of the usual brick red color. I noticed I was on a dirt road. Then that flimsy feeling came over me again and I felt my lockmold fade.

I was now in the void again..."

4>

Here is an example of teaching someone how to fly as well as being an example of my being "sly" with the person I meet. Again, by "sly" I mean going along with the person and whatever they are doing, even though I know I am projecting.)

"...(I had become lucid during a dream. I was in a typical looking suburb...) Then I felt the heaviness come over me that indicated my lockmold was getting weak. I was afraid that if I just kept walking I would lose my lockmold, so I turned and walked back by the school.

I met up with a young fellow who was walking home from school. I was really feeling my lockmold slip and I caught up with this kid. He was maybe a few years younger than me, heavysset and had greasy blond short hair and was wearing blue jeans overalls. I approached him and asked if I could hold onto him because I was going to disappear otherwise. He was quite casual about it and said OK. So as we walked for a few yards, I clung on to him and I felt my lockmold return. It was stable but shaky and I knew I had to go along slow and not get too excited or I would lose it. We started talking and he asked me if I would like to go hunting or fishing with him. I really didn't want to, but I said ya anyway just to keep things smooth. I thought the hunting was to take place over a small hill that we were walking up and I ran forward to the top of the hill. The scenery had changed from suburban streets to a country-like environment and there were woods about and I saw a small lake about a quarter mile down beyond and through the trees. My friend laughed and said the fishing spot was over the ridge and that we had to stop at his house first.

We took a turn down another road into the woods, past what I thought was a garage and came to a shack that was his house. We went inside and the place was very small. My friend's brother was there but he went into the bathroom. My friend told him to hurry because we were going to go fishing. While waiting I started talking some more.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Cameron," he said.

"Where you from?"

"Cleveland," he said.

I told him my name was Don. But I started getting bored and decided I was going to fly away and explore, so I went outside. I was about to fly off and Cameron came out.

"Aren't we going to wait for my brother?" he asked.

I told him I was going to fly away. He looked at me and started laughing as if I was joking, and he told me that I couldn't do that. I was ignoring him and ready to fly away. I jumped up to go but a tree got in my way and I only went up about 10 feet, so I smoothly landed back on my feet. Cameron looked at me in awe, his mouth open and eyes wide. I told him not to be so surprised, he could do it too if he wanted to. "Try it," I told him, "but first let's go into some open space." So we walked over to a gravel lot that was adjacent to his house. I encouraged him to go on and try to fly. So he took a long running start, like an airplane on a runway, and lifted off into the air with his arms flapping like a bird's wings. He went up about 5 feet off the ground and coasted a few feet before landing. I was standing there laughing cause he looked so funny flapping his arms. But I was still enthusiastic with the fact that he had gotten off the ground.

"All right!" I said, "I knew you could do it!"

Cameron was quite surprised and happy about his first flight. Now I decided I was going to be a show-off and show him how it was really done. "Watch this!" I said, and I shot straight up into the air, at least about 100 feet up. Cameron was down below me telling me something, but I couldn't make out what he was saying. I shouted back to him: "You should see the scenery from up here!"

It was really quite beautiful. I could see for miles around me in all directions and I realized that this was one of the best lockmolds I had ever had while I was flying. I could see the landscape spread out below me. It was a large forest area dotted by numerous little lakes. It also looked like winter because everything seemed to have a thin layer of snow covering, though the water was sparkling blue where ever it was to be seen. I circled around in the air currents a few times to get a good view, as it seemed like I was now quite a few hundred feet up. I wanted to go explore, so I tried to make some direction with the wind, and I had begun to drift away from Cameron and his house. Cameron was below me running and trying to stay up with me, and he was shouting at me telling me to come back. I could tell he didn't want me to leave and the wind was forcing me lower anyway. I began to circle downwards towards a small field

next to the gravel lot where we started out. Cameron was running towards where I thought I was going to land, but as I got within 20 feet or so of the ground, I completely lost my lockmold and was lying in my bed wide awake. I felt very refreshed upon waking."

5>

(Apparently, sometimes we astral projectors must look like ghosts to the people we meet in the planes. This is a cute episode where *I* ended up scaring instead of being scared!)

"...At first the darkness was very "electric." Eventually the void seemed like a heavy fog. I got the idea to try to look at my hands. Watched my body and a red tile floor materializes around me as the foginess of the void faded away. I was in an empty room with a red tile floor, it seemed like a small gymnasium or something. I started walking and noticed that my footsteps were very noisy. There were two open doors. One led out to a hallway, the other led to a storage closet. There was a light on in the storage closet and I heard someone moving and stacking chairs.. I approached the lit closet nervously and a little scared, not knowing what to expect. There was another entrance to the storage closet out in the main hallway, and as I walked by I saw a pile of chairs go crashing out into the hall. Then I heard grumbling and complaining come from the storage closet. I became a little amused and hovered out near the door to peek into the storage closet and see who was in there. Then, a guy dressed like a janitor walked out of the storage closet. He looked up and saw me floating there and I obviously startled him because he gasped at me. The whole situation was becoming very amusing to me so I flew down closer towards him. He ran scared back into the storage closet. I hovered for a second outside the door to the closet and the janitor reappeared, this time carrying a large garbage can, which he then proceeded to throw at me. He missed me and the garbage can struck the wall next to me, but I was surprised nonetheless. He ran back into the storage closet and I flew up towards a vent by the ceiling. I pulled the vent open and tried to climb into it, but I lost my lockmold and was back in my physical body."

6>

(Here's one time when John and I, who shared a room at college were both sleeping. I projected and saw him sleeping on his bed and I tried to wake him while I was out-of-body.)

"...Having some kind of dream. Had a false awakening, except I figured I was either awake, or maybe I could project. Tried to push out of my body. I was gyrating wildly. I flopped out sideways, like a fish, onto the floor next to my bed. I was in my bedroom. Stood up and went over to where J.C.'s bed was (he was sleeping there for real on the physical plane).

I nudged him, "John, wake up."

He rolled over, half awake, looking up at me.

"John, it's me," I said, "Can you see me?"

He said, still half asleep, "Ya, I know it's you."

He didn't seem too thrilled.

"Can you see me? I'm projecting right now. I'm in my astral body."

He said, "You look like a haze."

I asked him, "Can you see my physical body lying on my bed?"

He said he couldn't. But it was dark in the room and I figured he couldn't see my physical body in my bed because there was no light. So I stood up and told him to watch me. And I shot up through the ceiling. I felt myself pass outside, but at the same time I completely lost my lock-mold..."

7>

(The following is an interesting episode. I met a stranger, a woman, and I think she may have been a deceased person. This, I feel, is an example of consoling a person.)

"...Felt myself laying on my bed again. I didn't make any attempt to "push out" though, I just started flying forward through the void. Almost instantly, a scene materialized around me.

It seemed to be dusk, and I was standing on the front lawn of a house overlooking an unfamiliar neighborhood. It reminded me somewhat of the older and bigger houses in Detroit. There were a few people walking about on the sidewalks. I noticed a woman coming up the sidewalk that passed in front of where I was at. Without really thinking, I ran across the lawn, jumped the row of bushes separating the lawn from the sidewalk, and stood there on the sidewalk waiting for this woman to approach. She was an older woman with graying blond hair, wearing a long brown coat. She was acting scared as if she wanted to avoid me. She was only a few feet from me and I asked her, "What's your name?"

She stopped, but turned away from me and said, "I don't look at faces."

I could sense her fear and caution and I said, "Don't worry, I know how people are up here."

Then she turned back towards me, brightened up with interest and said, "You do?"

I was glad to have gotten her attention. But then I noticed as I was staring at her face, that her features kept shifting from that of an old lady to that of a beautiful young woman. Looking into her eyes I said, "You're very beautiful."

She giggled embarrassed. I didn't know if I should make a sexual move on her or not. I decided against it cause it was obvious that she had been afraid, but now I had

her confidence. I realized that she seemed scared and lonely and I figured she simply needed to be consoled. I hugged her and we began walking off. Then I faded out..."

8>

(This is one of the most interesting times I've met someone I knew during an OOB. The fellow I met, Eric, was a good friend I jammed with in a band. He had left school, but I was still at school. I met Eric while I was projecting. It seems very reasonable to conclude that where I ended up going in my projection was where Eric happened to go that night in his dreams. I tried to get him to call me. Notice how little lucidity he has. Also, note how I am "sly" in interacting with Eric.) "...Had been up all night studying for an exam and gabbing with John. Went to bed about 5:00 AM. I fell asleep almost immediately. Next thing I knew I was walking through a dance club, very reminiscent of the Detroit dance club scene. The place was large and dark, and there was a huge dance floor filled with very underground looking people. I was not lucid at this point, but I had a very strong feeling that something was up. I walked off of the dance floor into another room that was a bar. Sitting at the bar was my good friend Eric, with whom I had jammed in a band. When I saw Eric it dawned on me - I was in the dream world! And also, at this realization, I most definitely experienced the "headrush" feeling. My lucidity was incredible. Everything was absolutely clear and vivid. I felt exactly like I do when I'm awake. Once my lucidity clicked in though, I became very aware of my potential to fade out so I moved very slowly and carefully.

I approached Eric, vividly aware that we were in the dream plane. I decided not to say anything to him about this fact at first. I wanted to experiment and play with the situation. I approached him exactly as I would have done if I really had unexpectedly run into him in a club on the physical plane. I casually walked up to the bar and nudged him.

"Eric, what's up?" I said, extending my hand in greeting.

He turned and recognized me and showed the typical surprise one would show when seeing a friend one hasn't seen for a while. We hadn't seen each other for over a year.

"Don!, How are you?" We were shaking hands. Eric had a drink in his hand and he was acting as if he was slightly drunk, which I found quite novel knowing that we were in the dream world and one's dream body simply cannot get drunk!

We gabbed about what we had each been doing since we last saw each other. Eric told me that he was working at a radio station (which was true, and I knew this anyway). I told him I was still in school working towards graduation. I kept up this small talk, but I was trying to figure out what I should do next. Finally, right in the middle of our small talk, I looked at Eric and very casually, but seriously said, "By the way, Eric, we're dreaming right now."

He looked at me and started laughing as if I was joking.

I responded, "Look, Eric, I'm totally serious. I'm in Houghton right now, and my body is sleeping in my bed. You and I are on the astral plane right now."

Eric said something about me always having been a great kidder. There was a young woman sitting next to Eric at the bar and she was listening to us. She looked at me very snidely in response to what I was saying. I looked at her and said, "Look, woman, We're dreaming right now. Just wake yourself up, then you'll believe me." Then I made some nasty remark to her about the fact that she was just another typically stupid dreamer. Meanwhile, Eric was watching this getting a big kick out of it.

Then I felt myself begin to fade out. I grabbed Eric and said, "Uh oh! Look, Eric! I'm gonna disappear right before your eyes, then you'll know that this is a dream!" And I was gone. {At this point read entry 3 under "iv. The Surreal Regions"}

...This time I tightened my focus so much that the entire bar scene faded in around me! I was back in the bar again!

My lockmold was again very strong, but again, I moved slowly and cautiously so as not to get too excited and fade out. I wondered if Eric was still here. I walked off the dance floor, through a neon lit hallway, back into the bar where I had seen Eric. And no shit - there he was in the same room! I was extremely lucid and I really had to fight to keep myself calm because I knew I would fade if I got too excited.

This time Eric was standing next to the wall and he seemed much drunker than before. Not only that, he was acting incredibly un lucid, just like any other ordinary dreamer. This time, I decided, I wouldn't waste time with small talk. An idea occurred to me. I went up to him, grabbed him and said, "Hey, Eric, I'm back."

"Hey, Don, where'd you go?" he said smiling and slurring his speech. Just that I got this response from him was amazing because it implied an interesting memory continuity.

Very seriously I said to him, "Look, Eric, we are dreaming. Didn't you see me disappear? Can't you understand? This is a dream!"

His attention, however, was wavering. I didn't seem to be getting through to him. I shook him and continued, "Look, Eric, I'm in Houghton right now sleeping. I want you to wake up and call me on the telephone right now. My number is 7449. Do you understand? 7449. Wake up and call me."

For an instant it seemed that he had come out of his dreamer mind and seemed to be understanding what I was saying. A glint of recognition passed over his features. I repeated my phone number and told him to wake up and call me.

He said, "7447." I corrected him, but he just kept getting the phone number more and more wrong. At this point now, we were both floating about five feet off the ground, and we were in front of a long mirror up over the bar. I turned Eric towards the mirror.

"Look," I said pointing into the mirror, "We're floating, Eric. You can only do stuff like this in a dream. Don't you get it? We're dreaming Eric!"

Again, a definite glint of recognition passed through his eyes. For a second he seemed to understand the situation. I started shaking him violently, telling him to wake up while I was repeating my phone number to him.

As we were floating, I looked over on the wall and saw a flyer posted there that said something about Ferndale. I thought, "he knows I'm from Ferndale". I pointed it out to him, but continued pleading to him to wake up and call me.

But by now he was acting, not only like a typical dreamer, but like he was very drunk as well, and I gave up on him. He began to float away from me, what little lucidity he did display was completely gone. "This is futile," I thought, and I let him float away..."

{I then went on, in this same projection to meet the flying minotaur which is described in entry 5, under "Nonhuman Denizens Of The Planes "}

9>

(Sometimes you will encounter a person who appears highly lucid. The following entry is such an example. As you will see, I was surprised by this woman's lucidity and actually had a somewhat meaningful conversation with her. I think she was a dead person from the past.)

"...(I had been in a surreal space, the...) I "bent" out of the crystal and was standing in a relatively large, very beautiful room. It looked Victorian in its decor. There was a butler standing there shining shoes and staring at me. I ignored him, and looked about the room. It was very elegant. Intricately etched wood lined the contours of the wall and a large beautiful tapestry covered most of the wall next to me. A large glistening chandelier hung from the ceiling. Large windows on the opposite wall revealed a court yard outside and beyond this, a mansion-like building with stained glass windows. I was very impressed. I haven't been in such a beautiful place out here in the planes for a while. There was a smaller room cut off from the first by intricately carved wood dividers. I looked into this smaller room and saw that it was a dining room. Then I felt myself begin to fade. I quickly clung to the wooden divider and concentrated on stabilizing myself.

Luckily, I restabilized myself. I went back around to where the butler was shining shoes. He was an older man, bald on top, curly gray hair around the sides. He was wearing spectacles and a typical butler outfit. He seemed to be slightly attentive to my presence and he looked at me with a leer. On a small table next to the butler was a dish of brown pudding with little bits of chocolate in it. I went up, completely disregarding the butler, figuring he was at best half conscious anyway, and took a handful of the pudding. It tasted great! I proceeded to eat most of it. The butler seemed irritated but I continued to disregard him. Beyond him I saw a group of women sitting in front of the big windows on the opposite wall. I rudely and purposely climbed over the butler (with an attitude akin to what Monroe calls a "wild one") and approached the women.

There were four women sitting there in front of the window. One was seated in the center in what looked like a throne and she appeared to be in her 30s. She had a sophisticated beauty about her. She was dressed in Victorian finery and I thought that she might be nobility. Surrounding her were three older women and they looked to be in their 50s. They looked like old maids. As I neared the window I was captured by the beauty of the building across the courtyard. As the women noticed I was approaching I spoke out:

"This is some great pudding."

The younger woman in the middle addressed me immediately,

"Oh my," she said, "you seem to have eaten all of Ducheme's (pronounced "due shames") pudding!"

She spoke with confidence and surety and I was very surprised by this. Usually the people I speak with in my projections are idiots. This woman was not. She seemed as lucid as I was. Meanwhile, the three older women eyed me with suspicion but said nothing.

"That's a beautiful building over there," I said, pointing out the window across the courtyard, "What is it?"

"Oh yes, it is very beautiful," she agreed, "It is our clothes palace."

I was not sure what she said, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand you."

It is our clothes palace," she repeated.

"Wow! A whole palace just to store their wardrobe", is what I thought. I was surprised and taken aback by this woman's lucidity, the quickness and relevance of her responses. Such communication is rare for me out here. I thought that she must be a dead person still living out her astral life. I struggled for a moment trying to think how best to respond to this unique circumstance. All I figured to ask her is "What year is this?"

"1890," she said.

"Wow! She is dead!" I thought. There wasn't the least indication she was constructing her responses from my thoughts. Her responses were too natural for that. Besides, I would have felt it if she was pulling concepts out of my mind. Also, I asked her this question in total sincerity, with no preconceived notion of what answer I would get.

"Wow!" I exclaimed, "I'm from the future. I've come from the year..." For the life of me I couldn't remember what year it was back on the physical plane! I was stymied. I struggled trying to remember. I knew it was 19 something, but what? All I could blurt out was, "the nineteen eighties." But the whole situation was making me too excited. My lockmold began fading and so did I. My vision was gone, but I heard her say, "My how interesting..." Then my hearing was gone too. I awoke back in my physical body frustrated by losing the opportunity to converse further with her, but also happy that I had encountered her.

I don't think I ever had such a natural and meaningful conversation with anyone in a projection before this."

10>

(Here's an example of a time I was at a "rehab center" which is one of the places that recently deceased people go. The following excerpt is from a very long projection. I was in this place for a long time. Here I am only presenting one particular meeting from this projection. I met a man whom I suspect had just died (of course I have no way to confirm this, though you will see I tried to get information from him). He was in bad shape and needed help of sorts, as you will see.)

"...I was in the void and I struggled immediately to fade back in. I spun round and round, and faded in again at the place I had just left. It was apparent to me by now that I must be at some tremendous rehab center, like the type Robert Monroe described in his books. I was standing outside by the entrance I had seen moments ago. Through the door I could see the bar I was just at. When I actually faded in, I found myself flopping around on the ground like a fish out of water. When I had completely materialized, I pulled myself to my feet and jumped through an open window next to the entrance doors. I found myself in a room adjacent to the bar, and I saw the bar in the next room over. This room was little, with pasty green walls and a wooden table in the middle of the room. There was a steam radiator against the wall and a wooden bench next to this, and a bum was sleeping on the bench. There were two doors; one leading back to the bar, the other, opposite this, closed. There was a hospital push cart sitting in front of the closed door and there was a guy wrapped in bandages sitting on this cart. He was staring at me and I started to say something to him. He seemed angry at me and then he lunged at me and attacked me. Needless to say, I was surprised. I said something to him to the effect, "That was the wrong move buddy, I know more about what's going on around here than you do. There ain't no way you can hurt me. And I know that you don't know I can't hurt you." Actually I wasn't in the least bit angry or mad at him cause I'm sure he had no idea what was going on. Still, I felt like being macho, and I had to do something to settle him down.

I flipped him to the floor and started pounding him into the ground. I literally flattened him out like a pancake! It was like a cartoon. But when I saw that he wasn't being aggressive anymore, I stopped thrashing and helped him "pop" back out to 3-D , and helped him to his feet.

He seemed surprised that neither of us was in the least bit scathed after our scuffle. His attitude was significantly different. He was more submissive and friendly. He got back on his cart and I started to push him out towards the bar. I asked him if he was dead (seeing that he was on the hospital stretcher and all). Quite to my surprise, he said he had died the night before. I asked if maybe it's that he's been dead for a year (As I write this entry I don't remember what my logic was in asking him this). He said something about getting into a fight with his Dad. I asked him where he was from, and he said "the Land-O-Lakes, from Idaho." I asked for his address but he mumbled

nonsense. He told me his name but I can't remember it now. His demeanor was interesting. He seemed contemplative, quite absorbed in his thoughts. He had responded more intelligently to me than anyone had to this point in the projection. I wheeled him up to another door and faded out..."

11>

(Here is an example of how paradoxical it is to try to tell someone you meet that you are in the astral plane.)

"...What the situation was that, during an episode I had met an unfamiliar girl. We fell in love immediately and became lovers (and the feelings were quite sincere, I should add). I knew I was projecting, but everything was extremely real and I even felt that I did not have to go back. I felt that, if I chose, I could simply forget entirely about my physical plane life and stay right where I was at, and it wouldn't have bothered my soul in the least. I knew I could do this if I really wanted, and I was tempted by the possibility, but I ultimately decided that I would go back.

At any rate, my lover and I had gone through some adventures together. We were coming out of a movie, and I felt I would have to spring the truth on her. I told her that I couldn't stay with her because I was from another plane of existence. She didn't follow me at first, so I elaborated and told her how I had a physical body and that it was sleeping back in the physical world, and that I'd soon have to go back there. She looked at me, with so much love in her eyes, and she thought I was joking with her. She said as much and gave me a hug and a kiss. I was completely lost for words and just left it at that. As it turns out, we started getting sexual shortly thereafter, and naturally, once I started getting sexually excited, I faded out.

Now what was significant about this particular episode was when I was trying to explain to her that I was from the physical world. Here we are, her and I, walking arm in arm, down a sidewalk in the middle of the city. And I'm trying to tell her I'm from the physical world. But where I was standing at that moment felt just as real, if not more real than anything in my physical experience. To say that where I was standing at that moment was not real, not physical, sounded absurd even as I was trying to explain to her. I realized that it is impossible to really convey to these people in the astral world that they are not in the "physical world". To them, where they are at is completely real - to them. They don't have physical bodies to go back to. And dead people forget very quickly their physical lives. I knew I was in a realm of "dead people" - I just knew, instinctively. Dreamers act stupid - they do all the things that we, you and I, the people who dream, know we do in our dreams. Where I was at in this experience was simply life as usual. I was in some astral town where astral people (who we would call "dead people") were simply living out their astral lives, completely unaware that our physical plane exists.

This was not to be the last time that I would confuse an astral person by telling them that they were not in a "physical" world."

12>

(This final entry I shall present about meeting people was actually posted here on CompuServe the day after the projection occurred (Dec. 14, 1992). In this projection I met someone who was aware that he was dreaming. This was a most astounding experience on my part and the first time anything like this has ever happened to me. You will notice, first, that I tried to get verifiable information from this person, and second, how difficult it was for him to concentrate.)

"...The final episode I recall was the most dramatic. I was moving in the void and somehow locked into an episode. I seemed to be on an outdoor patio in a park or something. There was a group of people sitting at a picnic table and a few feet away another group sitting at one of those round, white metal patio tables. They seemed to all be together. I approached them with my standard question of the evening: I asked them if anyone knew the date. I got a bunch of nonsensical answers from the people at the round table, things like "Its the 2nd". I'd say "the 2nd of what?" and get no reasonable response. But then one of the guys at the picnic table said "There is no date, this is a dream". I heard this and was startled like I haven't been in a long time. I turned around and began talking to this guy. He was looking at all his friends as if to say 'you dummies, there can't be any date now because we are dreaming'. He looked to be about 35, brown hair, had on preppy clothes and looked about as modern American as you can get. I became very excited. I asked "you know we are dreaming?" He acknowledged this. I couldn't believe how lucid **he** was. He seemed confused a bit, as if he was not used to being so lucid while he was dreaming. I assured him he was correct.

I said "That's right we are dreaming right now." Then I asked him where he was from. He said Minneapolis, Minnesota, and made some little joke about the town and chuckled. Again, I was overwhelmed by his lucidity. His answers were quick and succinct, though he had that subtle confusion that comes with being lucid in the dream world when you are not used to doing so. He looked as if he was surprised by his own responses as much as I was. I told him that I too was dreaming and that I was from Detroit, Michigan. I told him that we were both dreaming right now and then I asked him again what was the date. He thought about it for a second and said "The 21st, no, no, the 2nd of December". I sh*t my pants! He **was real**. I couldn't believe it! This had never happened to me before. I immediately said, "Look, tell me your name and phone number and I am going to wake myself up right now and call you in Minneapolis". He told me his name, which I do not remember now. He was sitting there trying to recall his phone number. I could tell he was having difficulty in doing so, which is not uncommon for me even when I project. And then, almost without warning, I faded out and was lying awake in my bed. As I felt myself fading I became infinitely disappointed. I awoke thinking "So close, yet so far". Yet, at the same time, I was very excited. This is the first time I ever met and talked to anyone in a projection that was so lucid and had a grip

over physical memories like this guy did. I laid in bed for a few moments trying to gather the memories together, then I fell asleep for the night."

(END OF ENTRIES)

To wrap up this section on meeting people during OOBES, I would like to make a couple of closing comments. At the start of this section I discussed ways to verify your meetings with people you encounter while in the OOBES realm. However, after reading through the excerpts from my journal, I hope you can appreciate just how difficult acquiring such information is. There are two factors that make this a difficult endeavor. First, as we have seen, is the fact that people are usually in a daze when you meet them in a projection. You ask them a simple question like "What is your name?" and you get a garbage answer, or mumbo jumbo, or they say "I don't know". Thus, if you can't get any information from them in the first place, you are obviously in no position to verify this person's identity, whether they were dreaming or were deceased.

Now, the second reason it is so difficult acquiring verifiable information during an OOBES has to do with retaining the information you get. For, as is illustrated in the above entries, it is very difficult to remember simple facts or details that you learn in a projection. Many times someone would tell me their name or some other simple data, and I would forget what they said almost as soon as it was said. Or, perhaps I would remember during the projection, but once I awoke I would forget the information before recording it in my journal. And because I forget this information so easily does not mean I have a bad memory. Whatever is going on here is just not that simple. There is something about being lucid in the OOBES realm that makes it inherently difficult to remember stuff. And further, the process of carrying the information back here to the physical plane is also another factor that can cause one to forget what occurred during the projection. This is why I stressed early on the need to strengthen your ability to remember dreams and to always lay and try to remember as much of your projection as you can as soon as you wake up, or to make mental notes to yourself while IN the projection; all of these things help strengthen your memories so you can carry them across the border between the physical and the dream realms.

So, the bottom line is that getting verifiable information during an OOBES is no easy task. Some people (especially parapsychology types) have simplistic and naive notions about acquiring information during an OOBES, as if memorizing a fact while out-of-body is the same as memorizing a fact while in your body. This just isn't what's going on. To repeat: it is hard to get simple facts out of the people you meet during an OOBES and, it is also abnormally difficult to retain these facts if you get them. If they are not immediately forgotten during the OOBES, then they can easily be forgotten as one's consciousness passes from the OOBES realm back to the physical realm. And again, these factors have nothing to do with how good or bad your memory skills are here on the physical plane when you are awake. These memory problems seem to be inherent to the OOBES state itself and to the nature of the transition from being lucid in the OOBES to returning here to the physical world. This fact is probably a vital clue to the nature of the OOBES state and its relationship to our waking consciousness.

So, what can you do about this? I cannot stress enough how important the memory exercises I prescribed are. You have to do everything in your power to strengthen the memory connection between your waking and your dream mind, and you have to very conscientiously work to remember both your dreams and your OOBES. You have to work to develop habits that will ensure that you can successfully carry your memories back and forth between this physical world and the world in which OOBES and dreams occur. Obviously, these memory problems are not insurmountable barriers as my recorded experiences attest to. Once again, practice makes perfect and the more you practice, the more likely you will be successful.

H. Getting Into Trouble

During an OOBES, there are two ways to get into trouble:

- a. Threatening situations
- b. Being a trouble maker

I will not dwell on these at any great length, but I do want to comment on them. The first way to get into trouble is if you find your-self in a threatening situation. I've discussed this off and on throughout these notes, so I will only summarize salient points you should remember if you feel you are in a threatening situation while out-of-body.

What kind of threats can you face during an OOBES? Well, you can meet hostile entities, or you may find yourself in a region that feels threatening. In either case, as I have said throughout, such circumstances are in reality NOT threatening situations.

You must remember that you are basically indestructible during an OOBES and nothing can harm you. I have found occasion to remind myself during an OOBES that I too am one of God's creations, and I personally have a faith that says God doesn't go around needlessly hurting (its?) creations. God doesn't hurt us, we hurt ourselves. And more often than not, we hurt ourselves because we are ignorant of causes and effects. During an OOBES the **causes** of whatever threatening situation we may find ourselves in are our own fears, subconscious or conscious. Fear is destroyed by the light of awareness and understanding. So, the way to deal with scary situations during an OOBES is to overcome your fears of things you do not understand. Like I said, there is a process of growth and maturity involved in the attempt to learn to astral project, and sooner or later, you will have to face this. There is nothing wrong with facing this. It is good to face it. It's called "growing" .

Now, a much more serious possibility of a threatening situation you may find yourself in has to do with your physical body. It is possible that you may experience unpleasant effects in your physical body when trying to project. I, for example, have a number of times returned from an OOBES and, upon waking, had a terrible headache. I have always had migraines, even before I started projecting, but a number of times after projecting, I would wake up with a full scale migraine. I haven't any certainty of why this happens to me, but it does.

I have noticed that if I go without sleep, such as when I stay up all night studying for an exam, that I will also get my migraines. I suspect the connection between migraines and OOBES

in my case has to do with lack of sleep. When out-of-body, you are NOT sleeping, you are in a trance.

Being in trance is apparently a different physiological condition than being asleep, and my body *sometimes* treats an OOB as if I had gone without sleep.

I want to stress loud and clear that I get migraines whether I project or not. I believe that getting these headaches is specific to me. If you do not regularly get migraines, then you will probably not have this problem.

And on the other hand, I want to stress that very often, upon waking from an OOB, I feel great. I feel light and tingly. I have not counted, but I know I experience this pleasant feeling upon waking from an OOB much more often than I experience the headaches upon waking.

Another thing you have to watch out for involves what occultists call "kundalini". I do not want to go into a full scale definition of kundalini here. But for our purposes, we can define kundalini as a *latent* energy that each of us possesses. When this energy is "awakened" or brought out of its latent state, it causes us to have psychic abilities, among other things. It is the kundalini energy that is in large part responsible for the ability to project/have an OOB. The chills and shivers you may feel as you go deeper into trance are a result of awakening your kundalini.

Kundalini is a very powerful energy and there is a possibility that it may affect your physical body. Like I said, as you go into trance you may feel chills or shivers. You may feel a pressure at the back of your neck. You may feel a pressure between your legs at your sex organs. Most of the time, such sensations are harmless. However, if you feel any kind of sensations while trying to leave your body that causes pain, then stop. Don't force yourself. Just stop trying to project and try again later. Such pain is a result of the kundalini energy doing things prematurely and, if you force this energy too soon, you WILL hurt yourself.

I don't want to scare anybody saying these things.

However, it is something you need to be aware of. Chances are you will NEVER experience any kundalini induced pain. This is rarely reported by people that project. However, I once felt a strange pain between my legs and I didn't force it. I just stopped trying to project for that session. And I was fine. Nothing bad happened to me, and I have never since experienced anything similar. Again though, I am pointing this possibility out to you just in the rare case that you do feel pain in your body when trying to project. To repeat: you will probably NOT have to worry about this.

The second aspect of getting into trouble during an OOB is by being a trouble maker in the OOB realm. Robert Monroe discusses such people and calls them "wild ones". Usually these are deceased people who have begun to realize that they can fly, pass through walls, create things (thought-forms) with their mind, etc. These people will act in ways that we would consider "mischievous" or maybe even downright belligerent. Now, once you get into the OOB realm and start to feel comfortable there, you will be in a position to be a "wild one" too. Basically, you can do anything you want in the OOB realm and get away with it. As a more benign example, I will often walk into houses while I am projecting and explore freely, whether I am invited in or not. This is something I absolutely would never do here on the physical plane. Once, for example, I

walked into a house and there was a family there. I went into the kitchen and started exploring their refrigerator.

I found a gallon of milk and drank it (straight out of the jug!) to see if it had a taste (incidentally it tasted and felt like real milk). Meanwhile, they were staring at me wondering what I was doing in their house, though they had the typical non lucidity that people have over there. I made small talk with them and then flew out through the door and left. Again, this is something I would not do here on the physical plane.

If you look back even at the entries I've listed in these notes you'll see many examples of my being a "wild one": when I ripped down the wall of the house so I could go out into the rain; when I ate that Butler's ("Duchheim's") pudding; when I "flattened" the mean guy I met in the rehab center. All these are examples of me letting go of the inhibitions I would normally have here in physical life and doing exactly what I felt like doing with absolutely no concern for the consequences of my actions.

It's not even that I had no concern for the consequences of my actions - there were no consequences! The people you meet during an OOBÉ are in **usually** no position to challenge your behavior. You will encounter exceptions to this so don't get complacent.

So, all I want to do is point out this facet of the OOBÉ/projection experience. It is completely up to your moral makeup as to how you will behave during an OOBÉ.

I'll leave it to those of you with deviant imaginations to come up with other things you could get away with during a projection that you could never dream of doing here.

Now, maybe what I'm saying here sounds like a complete contradiction to what I said at the beginning of these notes about the need to have morals if you want to be a successful astral projector. Now, hear me good: I am NOT saying to be mean, I am NOT saying to hurt anything or anybody, and I am NOT saying to be evil during your projections. It will be on your conscience if you decide to act this way while out-of-body. What I am saying though is HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR. Having morals does not mean you have to be dead serious all the time. The OOBÉ realm provides ample opportunity to act in ways that you simply cannot act here, and provides a means to lift your inhibitions and experience a type of freedom of action that is simply impossible in this physical world. I recommend you explore this freedom.

IV. Waking Up - Returning Back To The Physical Realm

The final part of any OOBÉ consists of your return to this physical world. I would now like to comment on the process of waking up from an OOBÉ. Though I've been using the expression throughout these notes, it's kind of a misnomer to say "waking up from an OOBÉ" because you have been **awake** (i.e. lucid) all along! Actually, what happens is you come out of your trance. Let me first describe the nature of the transition from the OOBÉ back here to the physical, and then I will summarize the suggestions I have presented throughout the notes that pertain to the transition from the OOBÉ back here to the physical.

There are two ways that the "waking up" process may occur:

1. It is abrupt.

2. You have a "false awakening".

In actual fact, when your OOBÉ is finished, you will abruptly wake up back here on the physical plane. Coming out of an OOBÉ is NOT like waking up from sleep. Usually when we wake up from sleep we pass through a hypnopompic period (recall that hypnopompic means hypnagogia during waking up), or at least we lie in bed feeling dreamy and comfortable and many times do not want to get out of bed right away. Coming out of a projection is much different from this. The transition is completely abrupt and you will find yourself wide awake lying on your bed. As I said, you may even feel "light and tingly" when you return here to the physical, or in rare cases you may feel tired and unrested. And to repeat, in very rare cases you may actually feel perhaps a headache. And that's it; your OOBÉ will be over. It's now time to gather up your memories of your OOBÉ and record it in your journal.

However, there are certain complications that can arise which I need to comment on. What can happen many times is that you will think you are awake back here on the physical, but in fact you are NOT. This is called a "false awakening" by Oliver Fox an author on astral projection. Basically, you will come out of the OOBÉ and think you are physical again, but you will actually still be projecting! A number of times I have woken up from an OOBÉ, laid gathering my memories and promptly gotten up and started recording my experience in my journal only to discover I was not really awake here in the physical!

When you have a false awakening, there are basically two ways you will respond to it. Either you will realize that you are still projecting or you will not. If you do not realize you had a false awakening, it will become like a normal dream and you may go off and do other things, characteristic of your dream behavior, only to find yourself waking up **for real** here in the physical sometime later.

A number of things may serve as clues to help you realize you have had a false awakening. First, you may be in a completely unfamiliar environment. That is, you may "wake up" in some unfamiliar room but be under the impression you have ended your OOBÉ and have returned to the physical. If you still have any lucidity, you will quickly recognize the fact that you are in an unfamiliar place, and that should trigger in you the realization that you had a false awakening.

It may be that you have a false awakening, but you are indeed in your bedroom or wherever you had projected from. In this case, you may see subtle clues that will retrigger your lucidity, and help you realize you had a false awakening. One thing that would happen to me often, and there are examples of this in a couple of the journal entries I presented is that I would look at my clock-radio to see what time it was upon returning from my OOBÉ. However, when I would look at the clock, I could literally see the **inside** of the clock with its gears and such moving around. This was usually enough to clue me in on the fact that I didn't really wake up but was still projecting.

So, once you realize that you had a false awakening, you will realize you are still be projecting and you can continue to explore the OOBÉ realm.

Sometimes, during an OOBÉ, you may **want** to wake yourself up. For example, you may encounter some threatening monster or such and decide that you'd rather be awake. So, the question is: how do you wake yourself up while in the midst of an OOBÉ? Well, if you do not

spontaneously wake up due to the excitement (i.e. lose your lockmold), then what you can do is the following: shake yourself violently. Just shake yourself awake. This is what I describe in my Darkside episode presented earlier. In this experience I was terrified. So I jumped back into my body and started shaking myself and, even though in this case I had some difficulty, I eventually woke myself back up here to the physical world.

Presuming you are really now awake here in the physical world (i.e. no false awakenings) and just returned from an OOB, here are the things you want to do:

1. First thing is to simply lay there and gather your memories of your OOB. Do not move or think about anything else until you have recalled as much as you can about your OOB.

2. Next, immediately record your OOB in your journal.

Again, this can be simply jotting down a quick outline, or writing a 10 page narrative. I do, however, suggest you write down everything you can remember, no matter how long it is or how long it takes you. It is too easy to forget your experiences or distort your memory of them as time goes on, and the only way you can guarantee an accurate account of your OOB is to record it while it is still fresh in your mind. Also, put the date and time of your OOB in your journal.

VI. Astrology and OOBs

I said earlier that I would discuss using astrology to determine if one has a propensity towards having OOBs. Now, this will be a somewhat specialized discussion as it will mainly be of interest to astrologers. So basically, if you know nothing about astrology, you can skip this section.

The information presented in this section has nothing *practical* to do with having OOBs. I am presenting these ideas here mainly because I have a rudimentary ability to read birth-charts, and I have tried to determine what factors in my chart were related to the fact that I can astral project. And also, I have never seen this topic discussed in any astrology book I have read, so as far as I know, the following is a completely new application of astrology (if anyone out there knows better, please let me know!). So, the question to astrologers is: are there factors in a birth chart that will help indicate if the subject has a propensity towards having OOBs? As any astrologer knows, one can deduce a pretty accurate profile of an individual's personality if one can construct and successfully interpret that individual's birth chart. What I will do here is give the information necessary to construct my birth chart, and describe the factors in my chart that seem to be relevant to my ability to astral project. Afterwards, I will distill out what may be the major personality characteristics that facilitate having OOBs. Then, I would predict that people having a preponderance of such factors in their chart will have a greater propensity towards having OOBs than people who do not have such factors predominating in their chart.

Before I begin, so you astrologers out there know where I am coming from, my entire approach to astrology stems exclusively from Dane Rudhyar's Humanistic Astrology. This is the only approach towards, and philosophy of, astrology that I know and practice. So, the basis for my own interpretation of my birth chart derives from a Humanistic Astrology approach. This said, here is my birth data to construct my natal birth chart:

Date: November 9, 1965

Time: 5:18 PM EST

Latitude: 42 N 20.0 (Detroit, MI)

Longitude: 83 W 3.0

House System: Campanus

With this data, you can construct my natal birth chart and see the properties I will now list. The following list of factors from my birth chart are those that I feel are relevant towards my ability to astral project relatively easily:

1. 50:50 balance of the planets above and below the Horizon, meaning a perfect balance of subjective and objective. Or the ability to objectify subjective realities and subjective objective realities. To make one's inner dream life real like the waking experience, to make ones real outer objective experience into a dream.
2. Sun below Horizon suggesting an emphasis on inner subjective orientation and experience, i.e. more introverted than extroverted.
3. Retrograde Jupiter in second house, which is also below the Horizon, suggesting wealth and abundance of my inner psychological life.
4. Neptune conjunct to natal Sun, suggesting an easy channeling between my life essence and occult energies, energies possessing the quality of inclusiveness. Also, the glamour and illusion of Neptune are associated with the astral plane.
5. Also my retrograde Saturn, along with factors 3 and 4, suggests an essentially flimsy ego, one not very well grounded in objective reality. Such a situation would enhance the potential for OOB. i.e. a person who lives more in their imagination than in the objective, outer world.
6. Saturn opposition Pluto, suggesting an identification (Saturn) with death processes, i.e. the ability to explore the realms of the (so-called) dead (Hades, of which Pluto is the ruler).
7. The gestalt pattern of 2 in my chart, the so-called "Dumbbell pattern", which is related to the aspect of opposition, suggesting the ability to be aware of, and thus conceptualize. And also the balancing of opposites such as inner and outer realms, subjective and objective realities, etc.
8. Moon in first house, again suggesting an essentially transient and ephemeral ego.
9. And of course, the fact that my natal sun is in Scorpio suggesting an interest in things occult.

Now, what can we distill out of this chart analysis as the key features of a personality prone to the OOB? Here are the factors that I see:

1. The ability to balance opposites.
2. More introspective than extroverted, i.e. factors that point to a rich inner life.

3. Things that indicate a flimsy ego.
4. A natural propensity towards occultism and learning.
5. A propensity towards enhanced awareness or lucidity of one's environment.

It seems apparent to me that an individual who displays these types of characteristics in their chart will have a greater propensity for having OOBES than a person who does not. Of course, such a profile may apply to mediums as well (i.e. a person who can be taken over by other consciousness easily), and to sensitive people prone to psychosis. I think the main determinant here is not any particular individual element (which traditional astrologers tend to take too far) but is to be found in the overall **gestalt** of the chart. Of course, Humanistic Astrology insists upon interpreting individual chart elements solely in terms of the gestalt pattern of the chart, and that is exactly what I am saying here. The gestalt of the chart should indicate balance and awareness (i.e. opposition type aspects) and lean more towards the subjective than the objective.

Now of course, the type of personality analysis I am suggesting here need not be confined solely to astrological analysis. We are actually talking psychology and personality analysis here.

So, in general, given enough information, one should be able to develop a general profile of the "ideal" personality type that is especially suited for astral projecting based on the above characteristics. The advantage of astrology over traditional psychological analysis however, is the strength of astrology to construct a unique and objective personality profile based upon the natal birth chart. In a very real sense, astrology provides a systematic, and highly effective means for conceptualizing the elements of human personality, and maybe one day psychologists will discover this! And again, for those of you reading this, all my statements are based EXCLUSIVELY on Dane Rudhyar's ideas about what astrology is and what it can be used for, a type of astrology called Humanistic Astrology.

VII. Wrapping it all up

We are now almost done with these notes. What I want to do here is very briefly summarize the overall process of the OOBES experience, and then make some comments about the significance of having OOBES and how OOBES fit into the greater scheme of life.

A. Review.

We have discussed:

1. The theory behind OOBES/astral projections/lucid dreams. The take home message to our discussion of theory is that these 3 terms all refer to the same experience. The difference in these 3 terms is in the **world-views** that produced each term. Debating about these terms is not important. What is important is LEARNING HOW TO HAVE OOBES FOR YOURSELF.

2. We discussed two major methods for inducing OOBES: becoming lucid in a dream, and putting yourself into a trance. The message here is that, if you practice either of these techniques, you are almost assuredly guaranteed to successfully project.

3. We discussed the major facets of the OOB: the actual act of leaving your body, the things you can do during a projection (fly, etc.), and the regions you will encounter in the OOB realm.

4. Finally, I briefly discussed "getting into trouble" and the "waking up" process.

In general, these discussions have meant to provide a PRACTICAL introduction to astral projection/OOBs/lucid dreaming. Of course, this material was completely slanted and based upon my own experiences out-of-body and my particular interpretation of occult teachings. Almost everything I say in these notes may or may not apply to you. All you can do is practice the suggestions I put forth and see what happens. It would be nice if OOBs were a science. However they are not, and this fact we have to for now accept. It will be very helpful to you to read as much as you can about OOBs/astral projections/lucid dreams. Please look over the bibliography and go and find the books I have listed there that interest you.

B. OOBs: Subjective Or Objective?

So, as we wrap up here, is there any way we can summarize just exactly *what* the OOB experience is? Is it truly an exploration into unseen worlds and planes? Or is it merely a complex hallucination occurring in your own brain, merely a subjective fantasy world in which your subconscious mind exteriorizes seemingly outside of you?

Presently, no one can answer these questions with any certainty. The methods of modern science have pretty much failed in the quest to discover the nature and essence of the OOB. Parapsychologists and psychologists have produced interesting insights into various facets of the OOB, but by no means have defined it or even come close to understanding the act or its implications. Occultists also have very interesting and useful things to say about the nature of the OOB/astral projection experience. I strongly recommend that you read the occult literature I have in the bibliography. There are many useful and PRACTICAL hints scattered throughout the occult literature. I repeat, the best you can do is be open-minded to all the various ideas put forth about the nature of the OOB/astral projection/lucid dream experience.

As I said at the start, the study of OOBs does not occur in a vacuum. The fact of OOBs relates to many other studies including occultism, psychology, parapsychology, religion, physiology, history and a large number of other topics.

However, and I will say this for the last time, you can debate about definitions of the OOB/astral projection/lucid dream experience till you are blue in the face. But all such talk is only so much hot air. It's easy to speculate and theorize. It's not as easy to go and learn how to project for yourself. The only way you can get any sure answers at all about the nature of the OOB/astral projection/lucid dream experience is to LEARN TO DO IT FOR YOURSELF. That's the bottom line: LEARN TO DO IT FOR YOURSELF. And, if you choose this path, be eclectic, be open minded, and most of all, in light of everything you learn along the way, BE PRACTICAL.

C. Maya and Buddhi

We have now come to the end of these notes. To conclude my lessons on how to achieve an OOBE/astral projection/lucid dream, I will present the "big picture" presently in my mind by which I understand what an OOBE is and how it fits into my life. You can take my philosophy or leave it as you wish. However, these ideas are the fruition of a tremendous amount of study, reflection, more study, numerous experiences with altered states of consciousness, numerous qualities of experience here in my physical life, and more study and more reflection. There is a cycle: learn, do, reflect, learn some more, do some more, reflect some more. This cycle goes on and on for our whole lives.

Presently, one of my major interests centers on understanding ancient Hindu ideas. I have been led to study Hinduism because, as far as I can tell, the Hindus probably had the most complete understanding of altered states of consciousness of any other culture I know of, even our own. In our culture today, we are completely preoccupied by physical consciousness, by the experience of our consciousness here in the physical world. As I already said, we do not even understand the nature of the fact that we dream. And it seems that everything we attempt to understand today has to be fit into physical terms or we consider it irrelevant, fantasy, mythology, or meaningless.

The ancient Hindus, on the other hand, had developed an elaborate science of human psychology while our ancestors were still barbarians in the forests of Europe. This science they called "yoga", and behind this science is an elaborate system of philosophy that has been captured in the Vedas, Upanishads, Tantras and in other ancient Hindu holy writings.

The Hindus were *introspective* and the things they discovered through the introspective science of yoga are completely amazing. Millenia ago, the Hindus mapped out the inner planes, and mapped out the methods and techniques needed to access these inner planes.

The ultimate achievement of Hindu civilization, was, however, to create methods by which we humans could experience a direct relationship with the SOURCE of all creation. Hindus called this "becoming enlightened", and they call this SOURCE "Brahman". Call it God, call it Brahman, call it whatever you want. It doesn't matter what name you give it, because the source of all existence is ALL names, and ALL things. And the Hindus learned how to directly experience this source through the methods of yoga.

The Hindu outlook is a viewpoint far removed from our everyday life here at the cusp of the twenty-first century. We of the so-called "modern" world are like naive, rambunctious teenagers compared to the mature, inclusive outlook of the Hindus. We are marveled by the physical world, and marveled by the mind we possess that allows us to mold and shape the physical world in terms of our desires and ideas - even though we haven't the slightest idea what we are doing. The Hindus, though, understood what was going on. They understood the nature of Humankind, and all the invisible layers that appear to separate humans from the SOURCE.

These are the ideas I presently use to understand what OOBES are and how they fit into the greater scope of our lives as conscious beings in the cosmos, and these ideas I will express to end this presentation.

There are two ideas from Hindu thought that we do not possess in our culture or in our language. These ideas are "maya" and "buddhi". Understanding these two ideas *as Hindus understand these ideas* gives us an infinitely powerful framework to make sense not only of the OOBE, but of our entire life and experience.

I was surprised to read in a book about Hindu culture that the word "buddhi" translates as "to reflect" or "reflection". In our culture the word "buddhi" comes to us in the concept of the buddhic plane, or the idea of a buddha, or in the idea of bodhistava.

All of these words have tremendous *spiritual* connotations, but it is a type of spirituality that is unknown to us in the present day of modern techno-mass production culture. To us, spirituality is a flimsy term or it is an emotion-laden term. We rarely ever think of spiritual things as being intellectual, or even more rarely, as being something *greater* than our intellect. In our modern world, we worship our intellect, which, in occult terms means that the highest level we tend to operate on is the mental plane. We understand the world through ideas, symbols, names, theories and definitions and we are content with this (if not downright smug about it). In effect, the "God" of our present-day culture is the intellect and its creations. The reality is though, in our ignorance, we simply do not know what we are missing. Only a few of the more daring thinkers of our age would have suggested that there is something greater than the human mind, and have the courage to follow such an insight through to its logical conclusion (see for example, the book by Dane Rudhyar in the bibliography).

Buddhi is indeed that essence of spirituality that is GREATER THAN THE HUMAN MIND. But what is buddhi? Why does buddhi mean "to reflect"? To put it into terms that are meaningful to us as a people preoccupied by the mind, BUDDHI IS THAT ASPECT OF THE SOURCE OF ALL CREATION WHICH CAN OPERATE IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE. Buddi is the divine in the mundane, the spirituality of the secular. Buddi is GOD as God manifests in our everyday lives and in human history. Dane Rudhyar put it something like this: as a crystal is a perfect structure which can then reflect the light of the sun and display the light of the sun in a myriad of multicolored facets, likewise is the human mind like a crystal that can, when the mind is made clean and perfect, reflect the light of the divine into a myriad of multi-colored facets, and these facets are the sum total of human experience. In other words, buddhi is when our mind is clean and pure and reflects in the light of the divine essence that underlies all of creation.

The second Hindu term of relevance here is the idea of "maya". Maya is translated in a number of ways in our culture, with each translation capturing a part of the meaning of the word maya. Maya is: illusion, magic, the power of life, the Great Mother, transience and change, impermanence, time. The basic idea behind the Hindu concept of maya is an idea very far removed from our everyday approach to life here in the late twentieth century. For the idea of maya means that all that we can perceive, all that we think, all that we experience, is but ephemeral and transient. All of phenomenal reality, all of the manifested universe - both physical AND nonphysical - are but a momentary shadow of the Divine Source. The closest idea we have to maya in our collective consciousness is Plato's allegory of the cave, in which men chained to the back of a cave wall watch the shadows from the outside world dance before them on the cave wall. All these chained men can see are the shadows and have no idea of the world outside that is the source of these shadows. This, according to Plato, is how the ordinary mind experiences

reality: they see only the **effects** and never once suspect the Divine Cause beneath the effects of life as we perceive and experience it.

So, in terms of stressing the idea of illusion, Plato's allegory is similar to the Hindu concept of maya. However, the implication of Plato's allegory is that being in such a state of ignorance of Divine Causes is bad in some sense. Why else would he present the idea of men chained in the darkness? This is not one's image of good. However, the Hindu idea of maya does not have such emotional overtones. It has, as a matter of fact, quite the opposite implications. For the illusion of reality as we know and experience it is the joyous expression of the Divine becoming enmeshed in the Divine Tragi-Comedy of Creation. Maya is not a sorrowful reality, but a Cosmic Dance of celebration by the Gods.

Be this as it may, we today do not accept the possibility that the entire phenomenal world that we perceive with our senses and the worlds we perceive in dreams and OOBes could be all of Divine Illusion. Today we take things very literally and very seriously. We believe very strongly that the word we perceive and experience is **real**. And this is both our strength as a culture and our folly.

However, as I personally have passed through the cycle of learning, action, reflection, more learning, more action, more reflection, I have come to appreciate the relevance of the concepts of buddhi and maya as very PRACTICAL principles for dealing with life.

What we call "reality" is in actuality a multi-layered, multidimensional, ever changing, ever transient "thing". We ARE maya; our life and experience and all we take to be so real is maya. In this incredible Divine Play of maya we have the option of reflecting the Divine, of allowing buddhi to become a progressively greater part of our being. We have the choice: we can get ever deeper enmeshed in the illusion of experience, or we can turn inwards to the center of our being and discover buddhi. Once we discover buddhi, we then view maya in a new light; we know that ALL is but the joyous play of the Divine.

The fact of the matter is, from such a point of view, the OOB is us exploring deeper levels of the maya, seeing the shadows cast by other shadows on the cave wall. Is this "bad"? No it is not. It is simply what it is. The realm of the OOB is a realm one step closer to the Divine Source of Creation than is the physical, but it is an even more illusory realm than this physical world. In both the physical and OOB worlds, our ideas and desires shape the reality around us, only this process is greatly enhanced, greatly quickened in the OOB realm. So, we may be one step closer to the Divine, but we are potentially veiled even more from the Divine while in the OOB realm than here in the physical realm, veiled from the Divine by illusions we create in the OOB realm from our desires and ideas, be these subconscious or not. But to say the astral is "closer" to the Divine or not is all only apparent, for the Divine is equally present in ALL THINGS, physical or otherwise, and discovering the Divine in our life is always only a heartbeat away.

So, to conclude these lessons in astral projection, I basically believe at present that, yes, the nonphysical realms exist, that yes, there is something in us that transcends our physical body, and yes, you can visit these realms easily if you learn the right things. But, though the implications of these facts are astounding from within the materialistic and secular mind-set of our present culture, from the point of view of the ancient Hindus, this is all no big deal. You can be as ignorant

of the Divine in the OOBÉ realms as you are here. In the end, all that matters is to open yourself up to buddhi. By opening up to buddhi, you will find the maya to be an infinitely enjoyable place, whether in this world or any other.

I would like to end this presentation with the following quote from Dane Rudhyar, a man who truly understood buddhi.

"If we do not accept the existence of spirit as a transpersonal, transcultural, and metabiological power, the only other possible way of interpreting with some degree of consistency the obvious facts of personal and collective human experience is to adopt a materialistic approach, whether as developed by Marx or by other materialists; but such an interpretation excludes many of the most significant experiences of man. It leads to a most depressing world-view, essentially devoid of meaning and purpose. On the other hand, if the existence of spirit as a creative and transformative power is accepted, and its action in and through mind is clearly understood and adequately formulated, the material facts find their place within an all-inclusive picture of cosmic activity which takes nothing from them, but instead endows them with a transphysical and metabiological significance stimulating human beings to more conscious, sustained, and eventually more radiant endeavors." -Dane Rudhyar. "Culture, Crisis and Creativity", (page 106).

VIII ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY- Recommended Reading List

There are basically 3 different types of books in this list.

1. Books about HOW TO astral project, which give techniques.
2. Books about people's experiences in the OOBÉ realm.

These are written in the first person and are autobiographical.

3. Books not specifically about astral projection but that provide background information on topics related to astral projection.

For each book on this list I will specify which category(ies) it falls under, and then say a few words about the book. The list is simply in alphabetical order according to the author's name. By no means is this a complete list. It is only meant to give you a starting exposure to literature relevant to astral projection/OOBÉs/ lucid dreaming. The books listed here are, however, those I have found to be particularly useful.

Besant, A. A Study In Consciousness, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 8th edition, 1980.

This book is not about astral projection. This book is an excellent and profound introduction to theosophical occultism.

Besant, A., and Leadbeater, C.W. Occult Chemistry. London: Theosophical Publishing House, 2nd edition, 1919.

This book is not about astral projection. This book describes Besant and Leadbeater's clairvoyant investigations into the structure of the atom. The reason this book is relevant is because Besant and Leadbeater use the little known psychic ability anima (called also "magnifying clairvoyance" or "micro-psi) which I discussed under the section of the notes titled "Surreal Spaces". As you can exercise the ability of anima during your projections, this book gives you some idea of what is possible to see using this psychic ability.

Besant, A. and Leadbeater, C.W. Thought-Forms. Wheaton, IL: Quest, 5th edition, 1986. (Originally published in 1901).

This book is not about astral projection. Again, this book provides important background information relevant to the OOB. This is a classic book, the first ever to describe thought-forms. You will encounter thought-forms when out-of-body and this book will give you a good understanding of the nature of thought-forms, what they are and how they behave.

Fox, Oliver. Astral Projection A Record of Out-of-the Body Experiences. Citadel Press, Secaucus, N.J., 1975.

This is one of the classic first person accounts of the OOB. Oliver Fox was highly influenced by theosophical ideas, so his accounts generally fall under the occult world-view. There are many useful tips in this book as well. For example, this is the book that first described "False Awakenings".

Hall, Manly P. Unseen Forces. Los Angeles, CA. Philosophical Research Society, Inc. 1978.

This book is not about astral projection. Again, this book provides excellent background material about the forces and inhabitants of the inner planes. It is written from the occult perspective. Most important this book discusses the "Dweller on the Threshold". I highly recommend any of the books by Manly Hall. He is a highly informative and intelligent speaker. His material contains a vast wealth of useful information.

Leadbeater, C.W. Man Visible And Invisible. Wheaton, IL: Quest, 3rd Quest printing, abridged, 1980.

This book is not about astral projection. This book is about occult anatomy. Here, the various bodies (astral, mental and buddhic) are described in detail. Leadbeater claimed to be able to perceive these bodies

using clairvoyance. Again, this is important background information. I also strongly recommend reading any and all Leadbeater books you can get your hands on. Of all the authors I have read, Leadbeater has been by far the most useful for understanding the nature of the OOB. Many things I have directly experienced during my OOBs are described in Leadbeater's books and Leadbeater presents many useful ideas I never seen published anywhere else.

Leadbeater, C.W. The Astral Plane. Madras: Vasanta Press, twelfth reprint, 1984.

This is *the* classic book on the astral plane. Written in 1895, it is still relevant in many respects today. Of course, just as the physical world and society changes, so too do the astral realms transform. Nonetheless, this book will introduce you to many of the important principles operating on the astral plane.

Leadbeater, C.W. Dreams. Adyar, Madras India: Theosophical Publishing House, 12th reprint, 1984.

Here we have the theosophical conception of dreams. This is a very PRACTICAL book for the astral projector. This book will help you understand the nature of your projections and how they relate to your dreams better than any other book available. This is a MUST read for anybody learning astral projection/OOBs/lucid dreaming.

Leadbeater, C.W. The Chakras. Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 4th Quest edition, 1985.

This book is not about astral projection. Again, this is another classic book in the field of occultism, and explains the chakras; how they function and what they do. Again, this is important background information and will help you better understand the nature of things you perceive while in the out-of-body state.

Leadbeater, C.W. Clairvoyance. Wheaton: TPH, 1986, 15th reprint.

This book is not about astral projection. This book is another important source of background information. Here Leadbeater defines the various types of clairvoyance. This book is also a MUST read because you will find yourself using the different types of clairvoyance Leadbeater defines while you are out-of-body. Again, this book will help you make sense of perceptions you will have while out-of-body that you could not understand otherwise.

Mavromatis, A. Hypnogogia. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.

This book is about hypnogogic imagery. This book presents numerous reports of hypnogogic imagery and also presents a number of theories to explain hypnogogia. It is an academic book, but it is highly informative. My favorite aspect of this book is that it is the only academic type book about altered states of consciousness I have ever read that suggests that the theories of Besant and Leadbeater may be the most suitable theories for explaining altered states of consciousness.

Monroe, R. Journeys Out Of The Body. New York: Doubleday, 1971.

This book too is a classic in the astral projection literature. Here, Robert Monroe presents his personal experiences out-of-body. This is a first person, autobiographical book, but it also has some technique described in it. The important thing about Monroe's books are that they are NOT based on occult ideas, nor strictly on parapsychological ideas, nor on psychology ideas. Monroe has his own personal style of understanding his OOBEs. Nonetheless, Monroe clearly describes and supports many of the claims of occultists.

Monroe, R. Far Journeys. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

This is Robert Monroe's second book. In my opinion, this book is perhaps the most "modern" of any book about OOBEs. In *Far Journeys*, Monroe paints a picture of the OOBEE realms that is absolutely stunning. This book is a MUST read book. Again, what is very clear is that Monroe is describing the planes that occultists have described. However, Monroe's approach is different in that, unlike occult ideas, Monroe's attitude is that the reality of the planes is open to everybody. Traditional occultism tends to reserve traveling in the planes for special initiates, Masters and other supposedly "advanced" humans. Monroe severely challenges this view by showing that anybody can travel in the planes (or "rings" as Monroe calls them).

This change in attitude is very important, and it is an attitude that I share with Monroe. Also in this book, Monroe describes the activity and researches of the Monroe Institute in Faber Virginia, a research organization established by Monroe for studying the OOBEE. As I said in the notes, the Monroe institute furnishes tapes and programs for learning how to have OOBEEs.

Monroe, R. Ultimate Journey. New York, Doubleday, 1994.

This is Robert Monroe's third book about OOBES and is hot off the press as I sit here and write these words. In this third book, Monroe describes how he has discovered his past lives, and also gets a faint glimmer of something mystics have described for centuries, which is the fact that our psyches touch God. Actually, I am disappointed with this book. It is not as useful a book as is *Far Journeys*. You would think that, after 30 years of having OOBES, Monroe would have somewhere come across the fact that what he has experienced in the out-of-body state is very similar to what others have described. However, he comes across in this book as if he is the only one in humanity that has ever experienced the realities he describes. This is just not a good attitude to have in the OOBES business. Also disappointing in this book is that Monroe gets kind of "preachy" (as one New Age forum member put it), as if his particular viewpoint on the universe is the ONLY viewpoint. Again, this kind of closed minded approach is not good in the OOBES business.

OOBEFAQ.ZIP - OOBES FAQ file by Jouni Smed, 1994.

This is NOT a book! OOBEFQA.ZIP is a compressed file which contains the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) file for the Internet newsgroup alt.out-of-body. This file is available in the Compuserve New Age forum Library.

If you are not on Compuserve, you can send e-mail to the Internet address jounsmes@utu.fi and request information for obtaining this file. This FAQ file is an excellent source of information on the OOBES. It includes techniques for inducing OOBES, information about numerous surveys and studies of the OOBES and much other useful information.

It also has a large reference section which can lead you to many other sources of information about OOBES. This FAQ file is written mainly from a parapsychology perspective and quite obviously attempts to discredit occult views of the OOBES. Nonetheless, the author at least presents occult views side by side with non occult views, which is much more than most parapsychology presentations do. I highly recommend this file for reading. Though it is slanted with a bias I do not share, it is a veritable storehouse of information. Reading this file will expose you to the variety of ideas that exist regarding the nature of the OOBES. In effect, this file is a more advanced approach to the theory behind OOBES than I have attempted to present in these notes.

Ophiel. The Art And Practice Of Astral Projection. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Wisner, Inc., 1982.

This is a HOW TO astral projection book and is another classic in the field. Ophiel outlines specific methods for achieving OOBES and also describes many helpful hints. This is one in a series of "The Art and Practice of..." books by Ophiel. Generally, all of Ophiel's books are practical introductions to traditional occultism, and are fun reading too. Unlike most occultists, Ophiel does not have a "holier than thou" attitude and he also presents the view that OOBES and other occult gifts are meant for everyone, not just Masters. This book is highly recommended.

Powel, A.E. The Etheric Double. Wheaton IL. Quest Books (TPH), 1969.

Powel, A.E. The Astral Body. Wheaton IL. Quest Books (TPH), 1972.

Powel, A.E. The Mental Body. Wheaton IL. Quest Books (TPH), 1972.

Powel, A.E. The Buddhic Body. Wheaton IL. Quest Books (TPH), 1972.

A.E. Powel undertook the extraordinary task of compiling the writings of Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater and H.P. Blavatsky on the topics of the Etheric, astral mental and buddhic bodies. Each of the four books listed above is a complete compilation of these three authors thoughts on each of the bodies. These four volumes compiled by Powel provide a very compact and convenient source of information about occult anatomy as defined by Besant, Leadbeater and Blavatsky.

These volumes make a nice addition to any occult library.

Rogo, D.S. Leaving The Body. New York: Prentice Hall, 1986.

This is a HOW TO book on astral projection and is a MUST read book. If there is one book in this list that you should read, it is this one. Rogo has done us all an incredible service in this book by collecting all of the known methods of achieving OOBES in one book.

He covers Monroe's methods, Ophiel's methods, Fox's methods, the methods of Yram, and others as well. For the beginner in astral projection/OOBES/Lucid dreaming, this is the book you want. My only reservation about this book is that Rogo's ideas about the nature of the OOBES are not very sophisticated. Rogo was a parapsychologist who came eventually to realize that occult ideas are more useful than not. But he was not informed enough about occult theory to really give a coherent picture of the OOBES. Nonetheless, this is *the* most useful HOW TO book on astral projection available today.

Roberts, Jane. The Nature Of The Psyche. New York: Prentice Hall, 1979.

This is not a book about astral projection. However, the Seth books are MUST READ books. The ideas that Seth presents go one step

beyond traditional occultism to what we can call "modern occultism". In this book, Seth discusses the nature of human psychology. The ideas he presents in this book are highly relevant to the idea that what we perceive in dreams and OOBes are, in some sense, symbolic expressions of our "higher self" (or whatever term you prefer here). Seth helps us realize the greater contexts in which our physical, dream and OOBEx experience fit. This book is especially useful for understanding the differences and the overlap between waking and dreaming.

Roberts, Jane. Dreams, "Evolution", And Value Fulfillment, A Seth Book. New York: Prentice Hall, 1986.

Another Seth book. Actually, this is two books: volumes I and II. Here, Seth presents a concept of what dreams are that is completely unique. Nowhere else can you find concepts of the nature of dreams that are described in this book. I will not even pretend here to capture Seth's ideas. All I can say is I highly recommend this book.

Roberts, Jane. Seth - Dreams And Projections Of Consciousness. New York: Bantam, 1989.

This Seth book goes into the nature of OOBes and their relationship to dreams and our waking experience. Again, this Seth book helps us understand the personal symbolism that is always present in our life, whether waking, dreaming or out-of-body. This is a very good book.

Rudhyar, D. Culture, Crisis and Creativity. Wheaton: Quest, 1977.

This book is not about astral projection. I list this book here in the bibliography because it is an excellent example of how sublime occult thought can be. For secular intellectuals and academic types who think occultism is for raving loonies by raving loonies, I strongly suggest they check out this book. Rudhyar presents a view of human history, evolution and spirituality that dwarfs any of the feeble minded misconceptions that proliferate in secular academic circles today.

Sparrow, G. Scott. Lucid Dreaming, Dawning Of The Clear Lights.

Virginia Beach, VA. A.R.E. Press (The Edgar Casey Foundation), 1987. This book is about lucid dreams. It is written primarily from a psychology perspective. For those of you interested in this perspective, here's a book. There is not much practical material in this book. It is mostly case studies and a lot of speculation about the nature and meaning of lucid dreams and how lucid dreams are different from OOBes.

van der Leeuw, J.J. In Conquest Of Illusion. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2nd paperback edition, 1968. Original edition 1928.

This book is not about astral projection. This book is about enlightenment, it is about mysticism. I have advocated in these notes that enlightenment (or buddhi) is the perspective and state of consciousness you should seek. This book is one man's experience of achieving this state. van der Leeuw does an elegant job of displaying how becoming enlightened alters forever ones view of oneself and the world. He also does a great job of showing how the intellect is *inferior* when not illuminated by the light of buddhi. For those of you who seek the ultimate, and desire to overcome the limitations of the mind, this book is a MUST READ.

Zimmer, Heinrich. Philosophies Of India. New York, Meridian Books, 1956.

This book is not about astral projection. For those interested, this book is an extensive survey of the ideas of Indian civilization, including Hinduism, Yoga, Jainism, Buddhism, Tantra and Brahmanism. It is a beautifully written book by one of the foremost modern scholars on Indian thought. Any of Zimmer's works are highly recommended; he is a brilliant, articulate and sensitive writer. One might even suspect Zimmer was a reincarnated Hindu!

Please note: Any of the above books that are published by Quest Books or the Theosophical Publishing House can be ordered directly from the Publisher.

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Plane Talk: Astral Meanderings: Introductions and Update

by Don DeGracia (dondeg@compuserve.com)

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October 1995

This is the first in a series of columns I'll be writing for Charles Goodin's Astral Projection Home Page. What I'd like to do for this first column is introduce myself to those of you who don't know me, and provide an of update of things for those of you who do know me, as well as give a sense of what I'll be doing in these columns.

First off, I'd like to thank Charles for inviting me to write these columns for his page. I've gotten to know Charles over the past year. He and I are in the midst of conspiring to make as much information as possible about OBEs and altered states freely available over the Internet and throughout cyberspace. We encourage those of you out there who also have insights to contribute to do so.

There is no question that there has been a continued growth of information about OBEs and other altered states multiplying like weeds out here on the Net. This is both good and bad. It's good because cyberspace provides a world-wide forum for us to all share our experience and express our ideas - in other words, many of us are discovering through cyberspace that we are not alone in our quest to explore altered states of consciousness. It's good because a beginner or someone with interest in altered states can get a lot of information easily via cyberspace. It's bad because the quantity of information that is accumulating is simply massive. Just look at Charles' Astral Projection Home Page or René K. Müller's Spirit Pages to see how much information there is. This quick and easy access to information lends itself to a particular abuse: absorbing too much without digesting it. When I got into all this stuff, I had to read books; one at a time, the old fashioned way! This gave me time to think about what I was reading before I moved on to the next book. With all the info out here on the Net, its easy to skim over lots of it without really integrating any of it into your thinking. This is a pitfall to avoid, no matter how tempting it is to try to absorb large quantities of ideas quickly as the Net tempts us to do.

Another potential problem with the ever-multiplying info on altered states out here on the Net is simply the variety of viewpoints you'll encounter. Actually, this too is good and bad. It's good because diversity is good in its own right. Its good because this diversity simply reflects psychological reality. No one viewpoint is correct (a theme I will continually dwell on). On the other hand, spiritual matters, altered states, occultism and such topics are highly personal and highly dependant on where any one of us is at in terms of our psychological growth and maturity. When it comes to spirituality and exploring altered states, what is good for one person may be totally unhealthy for another and completely irrelevant to another person. Thus, in the plethora of information of spirituality and related topics available here on the Net, each of us has to use caution and discrimination when evaluating if a particular idea is relevant

to our present needs. In other words, what I am saying is don't unthinkingly accept everything you see and hear out here on the Net. The variety that exists out here reflects the variety of needs that all of us are experiencing when the information is posted. Thus, any piece of info simply may or may not be relevant. Based on my experience, most people out here do indeed know how to discriminate this kind of stuff, but its worth saying and reminding everybody.

So, having made my introductory remarks, let me say a bit about myself and this column. My name, as you can see from the author credits, is Don DeGracia. Those of you who know me know I'm the author of the free e-book DO_OBE, which is a "how-to" book about astral projections/OBEs/lucid dreams. For those of you who haven't read DO_OBE, I've been exploring astral projection since 1987 and have had quite a few of these experiences, well over 150 of them by now, though I've given up counting them to be honest. I've extensively studied these experiences, both in terms of reading about them (though there is still plenty more I have to read!) and in terms of actually having them. I've also studied occult ideas extensively. As well, I'm a scientist. I make my living doing biochemistry in a university. In a few months I should be getting my PhD in the field of physiology (but please don't call me "Doctor"!). I am very interested in all of science from physics to sociology, but I am especially interested in brain science. I'll have a lot to say in this column about brain science and its relation to the altered states we can achieve. In general, I take pretty much a scientific attitude towards altered states, but I respect and am open to occult theories of altered states (unlike many scientists, unfortunately). And most of all, I really try to stress a practical approach to altered states. Talk and ideas are one thing - being able to do something for yourself is another. So, more than any particular theoretical framework, I stress practical ideas and direct experience.

For those of you who do know me, let me update you on things. Its been over a year since DO_OBE was released into cyberspace. Over this year I have received email from literally hundreds of people around the world who've read the book and took me up on my offer to drop me email. People have written and given me many nice compliments on the book, they've written with lots of questions, and they have shared many of their direct experiences with me. And I have to say, its been an incredible education experience for me! All this feedback has had a substantial impact on my ideas.

For one thing, hearing from so many people has allowed me to see many similarities in our projection experiences. This only reinforces my contention that projecting is a natural ability that most of us can achieve with some effort. I am also now more convinced than ever that projecting (or whatever you want to call it) is a completely objective experience. There are far too many similarities in people's experiences to think that these experiences are somehow merely "subjective". Something very real and valid is going on here. As time goes on, more and more people, layman and scientists alike, are coming to appreciate this.

But probably most importantly, talking to so many people about OBEs, about spirituality and about life in general has really driven home something to me: our similarities really outweigh our differences. Its been an amazing experience for me to interface with so many people involved in pursuit of spiritual paths, and to see just how much we all really have in common. All this has only served to humble me even further and help to dissolve pretensions hidden in my ideas and my personality. In DO_OBE, I

stated, that practicing OBEs had a strong element of therapy in it, but I never imagined it could manifest like this - by simply communicating and sharing ideas and experiences with so many people!

In terms of my ideas about OBEs, my thinking has continued to grow and mature since DO_OBE was written. After the book was written and released into cyberspace, I ended up taking a graduate class in neurophysiology (brain science). What I learned in this class had a major impact on my thinking. Most importantly, this class opened me up to the vast and complex field of neurophysiology. When I wrote DO_OBE, I only had a scant familiarity of this field. Since taking this class and basically learning the language of brain science, I've begun to read and investigate the scientific literature on sleep, dreams, OBEs and other altered states. What I have learned in the past year is that the scientific study of sleep, dreams, OBEs, and altered states is more sophisticated than I had ever thought and definitely more sophisticated than the simple minded impression of scientific approaches to altered states I presented in DO_OBE. For example, and this may be surprising to many of you, at the time of writing DO_OBE, I was unfamiliar with Dr. Stephen LaBerge's work and research on lucid dreaming at The Lucidity Institute. When I read his book *Lucid Dreaming* (Ballantine, 1985) I was amazed at how sophisticated his viewpoint was. Likewise, I have discovered many other very good ideas in the scientific literature that have expanded my views about what OBEs/lucid dreams/astral projections could be.

Given all the new ideas I have learned, both from talking to people through the email and from all the material I've been reading, it's pretty clear to me now that the ideas I present in DO_OBE are not as balanced as they are in my mind now. I leaned heavily on occult ideas in DO_OBE and missed out completely on many important scientific ideas. One example is in DO_OBE I describe something called an "etheric projection". During an "etheric projection" one is essentially paralyzed and cannot move. Well, as many of you know, the idea of sleep paralysis is a common one, and what I call an "etheric projection" in DO_OBE is actually referring to this phenomena of sleep paralysis. And as many of you probably know, sleep paralysis occurs during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, when all of the muscles of the body are paralyzed except the muscles in our chest that control breathing and the muscles in our eyes that lead to REM.

So, in some respects, I've been playing "catch-up" through this last year, trying to get better informed about scientific ideas relating to sleep, dreams and OBE/lucid dreams (and other altered states).

I have a vision. This vision is that scientific and occult ideas about Nature and Humanity can and should be mixed. Science is a method for testing the validity of our ideas by using experiments. Occultism is a study of the inner facets of our psychology and spirituality. There is massive overlap between these two sets of teachings. Some scientists, such as Carl Jung, can be considered to be either a scientist or occultist, or both.

The study of OBEs/lucid dreams/astral projecting sits smack in the middle of science and occultism. Originally, this experience was the purview of occultism and called an "astral projection". During the first three quarters of this century, parapsychologists brought the study of projecting into the realm of science by conceptualizing it as an OBE. In the last decade and a half, psychologists have brought the study of

this experience even deeper into the realm of science by seeing it as a lucid dream and bringing to bear the tools and understanding of psychology and neurology.

Today, many scientists eschew the occult views of the projection experience and dismiss occult ideas as the mythologies of a less scientific and more naive age. Even the idea of the "out of body experience" appears to have fallen out of favor. LaBerge argues that seeing lucid dreams even as OBEs is also a primitive attempt to explain what these experiences are. I basically agree with LaBerge's ideas about the parapsychological approach. In DO_OBE I made no bones about criticizing the parapsychological idea of the OBE. However, I am less ready to dismiss occult ideas about the planes of nature. Too much is still unknown in brain science and in physics for me to conclude that the planes don't exist or that the occult idea that we have transcendental aspects (such as a soul) is hogwash. However, my ideas now are more tempered and more refined because I have a better understanding of the state of current scientific ideas about sleep and dreams and about the operation of the brain in general.

So, in a nutshell: Since DO_OBE was released a year ago I've learned more and continued to grow in my ideas about what projections are and what they mean to us as individuals. I've studied more of the scientific angle and have integrated this into my thinking, leading to a more balanced point of view between scientific and occult conceptions of the projection experience. And I've communicated with a lot of people, hearing a lot more about people's personal experiences projecting than I ever dreamed I would. This has really given me a lot to think about and I hope to use upcoming columns to share with you all some of the new insights I've gained. As well, all the new things I have learned over the past year have also affected my own projection experiences, and I hope to talk about these in future columns. So, stay tuned, there's more psycho-babble to come!

Take care, Everyone!

Don

Plane Talk: Astral Meanderings: Astral Projection or Lucid Dreaming?

by Don DeGracia (dondeg@compuserve.com)

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January 1996

Hi. Welcome to my second column of Plane Talk. As I stated in the previous column, throughout this past year I have really become much more familiar with scientific views of the projection experience. What I want to do in this column is discuss some of the stuff I've learned and ask the question: which is the better viewpoint: astral projection or lucid dreaming?

You'll notice I'm not even considering the idea of out-of-body experience (OBE). Let's review a bit and put this in perspective. In DO_OBE, I drew a broad distinction between the three terms most commonly applied to this experience: 1. astral projections, 2. out-of-body experiences, and 3. lucid dreams. I discussed how the term "astral projecting" defines an occult view of this experience. Which is to say that when we have this experience we have left the physical plane and entered the astral (or one of the other planes). "OBE" is a term from parapsychology and for the most part implies that some invisible part of ourselves leaves the body and is free to travel around in the physical world. The term "lucid dreaming" is the psychologist's view of this phenomena and this term doesn't even consider the issue of whether anything "leaves the body" or not, but states that what is happening is that we are aware that we are dreaming while we are within the dream.

In my previous column, I put these three terms in a historical perspective. The oldest term is astral projecting. The occultists were the first group to take this phenomena seriously and try to give it an explanation. Because it is very obvious once you learn to project that you are not in the physical world of waking life, the occultists concocted the view that, naturally enough, you are no longer in the physical world. They naturally enough thought that, since you are obviously somewhere doing something, that you must be in an altogether different world. This, I believe is the basis for the idea of the astral plane and the occult idea of the planes in general. Historically, this idea crystallized firmly in 1895 with Charles Leadbeater's book *The Astral Plane*. Other contributors to this view were Oliver Fox's *Astral Projection* and Muldoon and Carington's *The Projection of the Astral Body*.

However, as we progressed from the 19th to the 20th century, non-occult folks got interested in the phenomena of projecting. This effort began with the British Society for Psychical Research (SPR), which was a group of scientists interested in investigating claims of paranormal and occult phenomena. The "science" of parapsychology grew here in the United States out of the approach of the SPR. The parapsychologists here in the United States, lead by J.B. Rhine, took a mostly statistical approach to

things, and their paradigms were never very well defined. It was the parapsychologists who created the term "OBE", rejecting the older term "astral projection". The parapsychologists abandoned the occult idea of the nonphysical planes and instead viewed the OBE as somehow the person's consciousness could leave the body and travel to distant locations in the physical world. The one advance the parapsychologists had over the occultists is that they tried to test their ideas experimentally. However, the view of the OBE as occurring in the physical world never worked out. Experiments in which subjects were supposed to have an OBE and acquire information from the next room or down the hall never produced any clear cut results. The problem with the parapsychological view of the OBE is that it rejected the occult view of astral projection, and thus cut itself off from important sources of information about the nature of this experience. Had parapsychologists read occult treatises about astral projection, they never would have looked for the OBE in the physical world. On the other hand, as I said, at least parapsychologist tried to experimentally test their ideas. Occultists never really did experiments. The old astral projection authors would learn to project and their books mostly describe what they experienced in this state - but they never devised ways to test their ideas.

So, parapsychology as a whole, which got its start in the 1930s, chugged along at low steam and never really got off the ground or went anywhere. By the late 1970s, parapsychology died. Thus, the idea of the OBE never went anywhere. It was a stage in our understanding of the projection experience, and it is a stage that has been outgrown for the most part. Stephen LaBerge has written extensively about how OBEs are actually lucid dreams. If you want to see his arguments, which are very reasonable and good, then [click here](#)

Meanwhile, as we entered the 20th century, there was a new science on the block and they called themselves "psychologists" and it was their goal to study the human mind. Psychology has passed through a number of phases of growth over the past hundred years. It began as an offshoot of physiology but began to acquire its own identity early in this century. There have been many schools of psychological thought. At the turn of the century were the psychoanalysts such as Freud and Jung. In the 1920s Gestalt psychology was born. Then a little later came behaviorism; then transpersonal psychology. And all along, physiological psychology - which is a view of the human mind as a product of brain physiology - progressed and evolved. And in the 1970s a new type of psychology - cognitive psychology - evolved, and is today the main approach to academic psychology. Cognitive psychology studies how our minds work. And most importantly cognitive psychology has dovetailed with neurology (which is the study of brain function), and together these sciences (which are quickly becoming one science) are painting a magnificent picture of how the brain creates the mind. All of these branches of psychology represent different views of the human mind. Each has a validity in its own right and each is worth considering. The fact that there are so many approaches to psychology indicates that the human mind is a complex thing. No one view of what we are can suffice. There are too many aspects to being human and each of these approaches to psychology highlights one or another of the facets of humanness.

Now, what is very important to appreciate is that all these differing views of psychology have one thing in common: an adherence to the scientific method. The scientific method is quite simple actually. It simply is a philosophy that says not to believe any idea unless you can find a way to test it . This is a

simple idea. It doesn't take a rocket scientists to appreciate the meaning of applying the scientific method to things. If we want to figure out the nature of things, we make up an idea of what things are. But we just don't believe the idea; making up the idea is only the first step. The next step, which is the crucial step, is trying to devise some way to test if the idea is true or false. These tests are called "experiments". And by testing an idea with an experiment, we can determine if our idea has value in describing the nature of things around us, or if the idea is just so much hot air. And remember, the goal of science is to understand the nature of things. So, in this quest, as we devise ideas and then devise ways to test them, some ideas are found to be right, and others are found to be wrong. It doesn't matter if an idea is right or wrong - it matters that the idea has been tested. A scientist who tests an idea and finds it wrong is no less a scientist than one who tests an idea and finds it to be right. Both are scientists, and both are doing their job correctly. So what I want all you readers out there to appreciate is this simple fact: using the scientific method simply means that you are trying in some fashion or another (i.e. by doing experiments) to determine if your ideas are correct or not.

And there is one more aspect of science we must discuss before getting back to the issue of lucid dreaming or astral projecting. This is the nature of logical reasoning. Logic itself is simple too. The idea of logic is that ideas are related to each other in a meaningful fashion. Logic is simply a way of thinking clearly. There are two main approaches to using logic: one is called inductive, the other deductive. The difference between these is as follows. When you are inductive, you begin your reasoning with particulars, and from these try to draw generalizations. Deduction is the opposite: you start with a general viewpoint, and from this try to predict what the particulars will be. These are opposite ways to use logic.

Now, most science is, in general, inductive. What this means is you start with a bunch of particular observations, and from these try to draw a "big picture" or conclusion. The reason most science is inductive is because you test individual ideas by doing experiments. Each experimental result gives you one particular piece of information. As you piece together more and more particulars, a picture emerges, just like when you put a jigsaw puzzle together.

On the other hand, deduction works the opposite way. You start with some very broad generalization and from this try to "deduce" what the particulars will be. So, with deduction you start with the "big picture" and you logic your way to the details. Mathematics is mostly deductive, but most science is not. The only science that is mostly deductive is physics, and this is because physics is mostly mathematics. Physicists and mathematicians will sit and concoct "big pictures" and from these try to deduce details. Einstein's Theory of Relativity is an example of deduction. Einstein made up a set of ideas about the "big picture", and, by working through a bunch of math, came to conclusions about particular details. Then, experimentalists could set up experiments and test these details.

Now, the point of defining what induction and deduction are is to make this statement: the two scientific views of the projection experience - the view of OBEs and the view of lucid dreams - are inductive viewpoints. The occult viewpoint of astral projection is a deductive viewpoint. In the case of parapsychology, it made up a bunch of particular ideas and tested them using experiments. These ideas proved, for the most part, to be wrong. Thus, this is one reason why I am not going to even consider the

parapsychological view of the OBE as a serious contender to explain the nature of the projection experience.

Now, let's get back to psychology. Psychology, like most sciences, is inductive. Some of the approaches above were deductive because they started with a big picture - such as Freudian or Jungian psychoanalytic theory. But for the most part, psychology has been an inductive science. It begins by coming up with ideas about particular details, testing them, and, as time goes on, begins to construct a big picture about how the human mind works. For the sake of our discussion, we need to focus on two of the areas of inquiry of psychology. One is the area of sleep research, the other is the area of dream research.

We all know sleep and dreams go hand in hand. However, the scientific views of sleep and dreams have at times been together and at times separated. This is because sleep is something that happens to our whole body but dreams are something that are in our mind. In the Freudian theory of dreams, there is minimal emphasis on the role of the body and dreams are seen as purely psychological things. Early in this century, sleep research too was separated from dream research. Sleep researchers were physiologists working with rats and cats, trying to understand what goes on in the body when the body falls asleep.

It was during the 1950s when these two aspects came together. In the 1950s, it was discovered that our brains cycle through regular patterns of electrical behavior when we sleep at night. These patterns of electrical behavior are called brain waves, and names of these brain waves are pretty much common knowledge. There are alpha (slow waves), beta (fast waves) and delta (real slow waves) waves emitted by the brain. Now, during sleep, it was discovered that the brain cycles through 5 phases of brain wave patterns, and then repeats the cycle. The 5 phases of brain waves are called:

1. Stage 1
2. Stage 2
3. Stage 3
4. Stage 4
5. REM sleep

During sleep stages 1-4 the brain waves transform from alpha waves to delta waves. That is, the brain waves get slower and slower and also become much more rhythmical. However, during REM sleep, the brain waves all of a sudden become very fast and nonrhythmical and they look very much like the brain wave patterns of a waking person. Thus, REM sleep has also been called "paradoxical sleep" because, even though the person is asleep, their brain waves look as if they are awake. And most importantly, things happen to our muscles during REM sleep. All our muscles become paralyzed. People say that this is so we don't hurt ourselves when acting out our dreams by actually moving our sleeping body.

However, not all our muscles become paralyzed - two sets do not: those that move our eyes and those that move our lungs. Moving our lungs is pretty obvious - we sure don't want to quit breathing while we sleep! However, why our eyes do not get paralyzed is less clear. But the fact that our eyes are not paralyzed during REM sleep is where the stage of REM sleep gets its name. Because our eyes are not paralyzed during REM sleep, they move around. This motion is called "rapid eye movement". Thus, REM sleep derives its name from the eye movements that occur during the stage of sleep when we dream most and when the brain wave patterns look as though we are awake.

This whole sleep cycle takes about 90 minutes to happen. And, as the night progresses, the Stages 1-4 take up less time in the cycle and REM takes up more time. So, when you first fall asleep, REM may only last for 15 minutes of the 90 minute cycle. But by the end of the night, REM may last for perhaps 60 minutes out of the 90 minute cycle.

Now, and this is probably no news to many of you, the study of dreams and of sleep came together shortly after the sleep cycle was discovered when it was next discovered that dreams tend to occur most often during the REM stage of sleep. Now, as it turns out, our minds are active during the whole sleep cycle. But the things we normally think of as dreams occur mostly during REM. REM dreams are the ones where we are somewhere doing something - which is what we normally think of as dreams. During the nonREM stages, our mind is active, but it is usually just thinking things, but it is not somewhere doing something.

We need to do one more digression before we tie all this together. In 1913, a psychologist named van Eeden coined a term: lucid dreams. van Eeden described these lucid dreams as dreams in which he knew he was dreaming and where he could very consciously interact with the things going on in his dream. However, back in 1913, which was the heyday of Freud's theories, and the earliest beginnings of behaviorism, nobody really took van Eeden's observations and studies of his own lucid dreams very seriously. As a matter of fact, some people tried to explain away van Eeden's idea of lucid dreams by claiming that there was no such thing as a lucid dream and that van Eeden must have woken up during the middle of the night and had very vivid memories of his dreams.

And the study of lucid dreams went pretty much ignored by sleep and dream researchers until the late 1970s when two groups of researchers put two and two together. Both groups reasoned as follows: First, during a lucid dream, one is conscious and can do things voluntarily during the dream just like when awake, and 2. during REM sleep, the eyes are not paralyzed. Therefore, if lucid dreams occur during REM sleep (which makes sense because - like ordinary dreams, one is somewhere doing something), maybe one can voluntarily control the movement of their eyes during a lucid dream. Now, the beauty of this idea is that it could be experimentally tested. You can tape electrodes to your eyes when you are asleep and measure the movement of your eyes. You can also measure your brain waves as well to determine what stage of sleep you are in. The two groups that tested this idea were Keith Hearne in London and Stephen LaBerge here in the United States. For a full account of the history of this research, I highly recommend Stephen LaBerge's book *Lucid Dreaming* (Ballantine Books, 1985).

To make a long story short, both of these laboratories discovered that yes indeed, the lucid dreaming person can control their eye movements from within the dream during REM sleep. This was a gigantic step forward in the study of dreams and sleep, and the impact of this research has not fully hit the general scientific community, even now, 16 years later. What this means is that the person experiencing the lucid dream can COMMUNICATE with people who are awake here in the physical world. They can do this by setting up a predefined code for eye-movements, and the eye movements are measured by electrodes that people awake can read.

Ok, then so what is the big deal? The big deal is this: the idea of lucid dreaming and the idea of astral projection are two different ways to explain this phenomena of projecting, or lucid dreaming, or whatever you want to call it. All of a sudden, with the work of LaBerge and Hearnese, we now have an experimental tool to explore this state. I cannot begin to overstate what a big deal this is. If you want to think of this experience as an astral projection, then you can think of what LaBerge and Hearnese have done is give us a way to communicate with people in the astral plane. If you want to think of the experience as a lucid dream, then you can think of this tool as a way to communicate with people who are lucid in their dreams. What this really means is that - for the first time ever - we have a tool to let us test our ideas about the nature of this state.

And researchers have indeed utilized this tool to test the nature of this state. And what has been discovered? A lot actually. There is no way I can summarize all the results here. Those of you interested in this work can dig up references, and also check out Dr. LaBerge's web site . The important finding though is that this idea of lucid dreaming works very well at explaining the nature of this experience. The evidence to date indicates pretty clearly that lucid dreams are ordinary dreams in which the sleeping person is "lucid" within the dream. This ties in directly with how I defined astral projecting in DO_OBE. There I said this:

"ASTRAL PROJECTION IS A CONTINUITY OF MEMORY BETWEEN YOUR WAKING AND DREAM PERSONALITIES....

...AN ASTRAL PROJECTION IS A DREAM IN WHICH YOU ARE FULLY AWARE OF YOUR WAKING LIFE."

In other words, an astral projection IS a lucid dream.

Now, for all of you with the stamina to read this far, we have finally built up the case to delve into the main question I asked at the beginning of this column: which is the better viewpoint: astral projection or lucid dreaming?

Again, we are dealing with two very different viewpoints here. The occult view is a deductive view. It begins by defining a "big picture" which is that the physical world is not the only world there is, but that there are other, nonphysical worlds, and that we humans have the ability to visit these nonphysical world. On the other hand, the lucid dreaming view is an inductive view built up from many pieces of a very large and complex puzzle. For not only does sleep and dream research come to bare on the lucid

dream viewpoint, but all of the inductive evidence about the brain and body are relevant to this discussion.

I am about 4 months away from acquiring my Ph.D. in physiology. I can assure you that the study of the human brain and body, and how these pertain to sleep, dreams and lucid dreams, is extremely complex. There is literally a mountain of evidence to support scientific views of the nature of the brain and how the mind works, and the nature of sleep and dreams. In comparison, the evidence that supports the occult viewpoint of astral projection is a mere mole hill.

However, a mole hill is more than nothing; anything is bigger than zero. What kind of evidence is there that supports the occult viewpoint nowadays? Well, occultists have done almost nothing to test their ideas about the planes and the theory of astral projection. That means that occultists have literally produced practically no evidence whatsoever to support their contentions. Nothing has changed in occultism since the original books were written almost 100 years ago.

Now, what is extremely surprising is that the little bit of evidence in favor of an occult view that does exist comes from science itself. There are two types of evidence: positive evidence and negative evidence. The negative evidence is the fact that scientists have done nothing to rule out the existence of the planes or occult theories. In fact, this is lame evidence because the scientific theories of the brain, the mind and how these relate to sleep, dreams and lucid dreams has NO NEED to postulate occult ideas to explain all the phenomena that have been observed. Believe me, the brain is more than complex enough of an organ that we can explain dreams and lucid dreams solely on the basis of the action of the brain.

Those of you who have read DO_OBE will recognize that I have done a complete "about face" in regards to what I wrote there. In DO_OBE, I argued that scientific views cannot explain our consciousness. Well, the fact is, I didn't know what I was talking about. That is the thing when you are ignorant: you just don't know what you are missing. Luckily, ignorance is not a permanent condition, and, as I've stated, I've spent the past year doing nothing but studying the brain and how it works - not only with regard to sleep and dreams, but just in general, how the brain works while we are awake and in a variety of pathological situations. So, I'm not apologizing for switching to a view opposite what I expressed in DO_OBE. Hopefully it will stand as a lesson of other things I say in DO_OBE, particularly what I say about being open minded and never stop learning about things related to projection. I practice what I preach.

Now, my shift in viewpoint is not that extreme however. I have not come to the point where I reject occult ideas and I have not become as staunch materialist who thinks that the brain creates our consciousness. I know too much about occult views and I know too much about what science doesn't know to fall into the trap of rejecting occult ideas at the expense of scientific one. Truthfully, I have not deviated one iota from my stated goal of mixing scientific and occult views. However, I have vastly opened my mind to the evidence of science and found it extremely pertinent and useful. And this has forced me to be less naive about occult views and much more critical of them. However, I still believe

they are worth learning, so I have no regrets whatsoever about the material in DO_OBE. It is a necessary learning stage and I am glad I have made this information available to people.

Now, I said, the negative evidence that supports the occult view is science's general ignorance about aspects of nature we currently don't understand. And again, this is a lame line of thought. Science is very robust and this kind of logic in defense of occultism is nothing more than whining and ignorance.

Now, what is really surprising is the positive evidence that supports the occult world view. As I said, occultists did NOT create this evidence. The surprise is that the evidence that suggests there may be some truth in occult viewpoints stems from modern physics. To explain this, I need to tangent off once again.

As I have sat in these graduate level Ph.D. classes in physiology, I have been amazed by how little scientists from different fields influence each other's ideas. By no means though is this a general statement. It's more a historical statement than anything else. The process of diffusion of ideas from one scientific field to the next is always a process in progress. New ideas in physics are not immediately applied outside of physics. It takes time for ideas to spread. And also, there is a critical factor of generational differences. The people who taught me physiology are 50 years old. They learned physiology 20 or 30 years ago, before many of the ideas in physics that exist today even existed! So, it's the "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" idea. These old folks are just not up on the latest - the majority of them at least. Some are, however, and these folks are brilliant and are creating a new type of science by mixing physiology and physics.

So, this said, here are the observations from physics that have direct bearing on brain physiology and therefore on the nature of lucid dreams, and how the mind works in general:

1. Our brain is a chemical system. The cells in our brain (called neurons) are made of molecules (such as DNA, RNA, protein, sugars, fats, etc.). These molecules are made of atoms. Atoms are defined by quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics is really weird and has more in common with traditional occult views than most people suspect.

Now, it is increasingly being recognized that quantum mechanical considerations have a direct affect on brain activity. People used to think that because cells are so big compared to atoms that quantum mechanics plays no role in cell function at all. It turns out that this is not true. It seems that to be able to explain the behavior of the protein molecules embedded in nerve cell membrane that allow neurons to conduct electricity requires quantum mechanics. These proteins are called "ion channels" and experiments have clearly shown that they are little quantum mechanical devices.

What this broadly implies is that quantum mechanical effects will affect the behavior of cells. Depending on how far you want to take this conclusion, we can end up with Alice in Wonderland. What this kind of evidence suggests is that reality as we understand it is a lot more complex and weirder than traditional, kind of cozy ideas of molecules and cells would have us believe. However, this kind of thinking has to be balanced by the realization that there absolutely has to be a predictable consistency to

large scale biological structures such as brains and human beings. Otherwise, they wouldn't work at all. However, within a certain degree of predictability, there is a lot of leeway for unpredictability. This is emerging as a general principle of biological system. Hence, one cannot draw on older scientific ideas to banish occult ideas per se.

The other level physics plays a role is with all these "Grand Unified Field Theories" that these physicists are concocting. These GUFTS, as they are called, are very strange and paint a picture of the nature of things much closer to the old occult views than the old scientific views. The "old" scientific views, including Einstein's view of space and time, define space and time as pretty much what our sense deliver: three dimensions of space and one dimension of time. However, these GUFTS are multidimensional models. One of them, a particular variation of super-string theory, sees nature as being 26 dimensional. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to come to the notion that these extra dimensions in the GUFT models could actually be the planes that occultists described.

However, this line of thought is PURE SPECULATION. Mainly because these GUFTS are pure speculation. However, as physics progresses, one of the GUFTS is going to turn out to have a more accurate correspondence with experiments than any of the other ones. If the winning GUFT is only 4 dimensional, then this will kill occult ideas. If the winning GUFT is one of these multi dimensional models, then it will probably be reasonable to say that physicists have finally discovered the occult planes. Only time will be able to decide this one.

What I am doing here is trying to paint a picture for you readers to illustrate that the occult view of astral projecting does not need to be seen as contradictory to the scientific view of lucid dreaming. Given what is both known and not known today, it seems likely that these two viewpoints are going to converge into one unified viewpoint. And this unified viewpoint will probably be much different from either the standard occult view or the standard view of lucid dreams.

But the fact is, this picture needs to be created. And it will be created by people testing their ideas by doing experiments, not by people who sit around and parrot ideas that are 100 years old. What I am spelling out here is a NEW OCCULTISM. Its time to transcend the old ideas, and transcend the old limitations of our thinking, its time to transcend the black and whites that have prevented us from seeing new associations in things. It's time to be creative, be open minded, and most of all - be well informed - of the evidence that exists out there right now. And to put this evidence to work to devise new way of looking at this stuff and of trying to find new ways to test these ideas. Believe me, this story is not finished. It is only just now beginning.

So, let me wrap this up. And let me be blunt about it. The idea of the OBE is dead. This idea killed itself, which is fine. The idea of lucid dreaming is very, very strong. It deserves our attention and our careful consideration, and it deserves refinement and continued experimentation. The old occult ideas of astral projection are just obsolete in some respects. There is still value in learning the old occult ideas, but learning these ideas can no longer be viewed as an end in itself. Learning these ideas has to be viewed as a stage to open our mind to broader endeavors and thinking. The old occult ideas are like a type of intellectual training wheels. They will serve to open your mind, but once it is open, you have to

strive to look beyond these ideas, to not be afraid to see their limitations, and not be afraid to criticize them and experiment them out of existence if need be. Any and all ideas are expendable in the search for the truth. Ideas can blind us from truth or they can be our road to the truth.

If you review the evidence that exists, it is clear that the idea of lucid dreaming is the most accurate and worthwhile viewpoint to adopt currently as you experiment with this phenomena and learn how to do it. But again, the occult ideas deserve consideration, particularly because science itself is transforming at a dizzying pace and, before long, science as we know it may well resemble the occultism of yesteryear. The bottom line is the message I preach in DO_OBE: stay open minded and stay informed.

I'll talk to you in the next column.

Don

Plane Talk: Astral Meanderings: More About The Trance State

by Don DeGracia, Ph.D.

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Hi everybody. Welcome to the 3rd installment of Plane Talk. This time around I'm gonna leave theory behind and focus on more practical matters. As I said in my first column, I receive a lot of questions from readers of DO_OBE and the vast bulk of these questions revolve around the practical matter of going into trance. In DO_OBE, I described what I call the Trance Method as a way to achieve an OBE or projection. What I want to do in this column is address some of the more general questions I receive about going into trance and hopefully clarify a few points about this practice. Also, I'd like to mention a couple new insights I've gotten for making your practices more efficient.

To start, let me briefly review the idea of the trance method. Again, this is a method for astral projecting, inducing an OBE, or going into a lucid dream (as all you readers know by now, I believe these three terms refer to the same experience). The idea of the trance method is to go directly from the waking state to the projection state. In a nutshell, what this method entails is letting your body fall asleep while, at the same time, you keep your mind awake and alert. This method is practically identical to the method taught by Dr. Stephen LaBerge called WILD (waking induced lucid dream). In DO_OBE, I

described the stages involved in going into trance. You lay down with the intent to project and allow yourself to relax deeper and deeper. As your relaxation deepens you can expect to experience a number of changes in bodily sensations and in your perceptions. These include feeling sensations of getting heavy, sinking or floating, and perhaps the onset of hypnagogic images and sounds. After a certain point, your trance becomes deep enough and you feel yourself 'separate' at which point you are 'out' of your body. You may or may not experience a momentary break in your consciousness. And when you finally get out, you will either be somewhere in the projection/dream realm, or in a place I call 'the void', but you will be in full consciousness. At this point, your projection/OBE/lucid dream will have begun.

For readers unfamiliar with the Trance method, I strongly recommend you read up on it in DO_OBE, give the exercises a try, and then come back and read this column. This column is meant to be a supplement to what is described in DO_OBE, and is NOT intended as a stand-alone introduction to going into trance.

One of the most frequent questions I receive has to do with feeling vibrations as you go into trance. Quite often, after you have been laying there for a while (perhaps for 10-15 minutes depending on how tired you are), you may feel a tingling sensation on your skin, or in your arms and legs. When you feel it on your skin, it feels almost like light chills, as if you are slightly cold. I have found when I get these sensations in my arms or legs that they are somewhat uncomfortable.

Now, the point is, it is inevitable at some point in your practicing of the trance method that you will feel these kinds of sensations. Many people write me and ask me what these vibrations mean, and, if by feeling these vibrations, does this indicate they are getting close to projecting. These are, of course, very valid questions. And here is the answer I tend to give.

Remember that when you go into trance, you are trying to let your body fall asleep, yet keep your mind awake. What this means is that you want to loose the perception of your bodily sensations. This means you do NOT want to feel your body. These vibrations are sensations coming directly from your body. By focusing on them in your consciousness, this only serves to keep your body awake. Therefore, feeling vibrations actually PREVENTS you from projecting.

Now, this may go against things you have read elsewhere. Robert Monroe (author of Journeys Out of Body, Far Journeys and Ultimate Journeys), for example, wrote about the vibrations that often accompanied his OBEs. But he is referring to something different here. In DO_OBE, I spoke about kinesthetic sensations that occurred as you went deeper into trance. Again, this included feelings that your body was getting heavier, that you are sinking into the bed, that your body is floating, tipping or other such sensations. These kinesthetic sensations seem like true bodily sensations, but they are not. I perhaps may not have described these sensations, and what they mean, as well as I could have in DO_OBE, and since they are so related to this idea of vibrations, let me elaborate a bit about kinesthetic sensations.

The term "kinesthetic sensations" normally means "feelings of your body moving". However, in DO_OBE, I used it in a different sense. What I was talking about are bodily sensations that you feel after your body has in fact fallen asleep. What I now think these trance-associated kinesthetic sensations are are hallucinations created by your brain after your body has indeed fallen asleep. See, what I didn't know when DO_OBE was written is that, when we fall asleep, our bodies become paralyzed, particularly during the REM phase of sleep, which is the sleep stage in which both ordinary dreams and projections/lucid dreams occur. That is, during REM sleep, sensations coming into our brains from our senses, including our senses of touch and bodily sensation, are inhibited. In other words, if someone were to touch you while you slept, that sensation does not get to your brain as easily as it would if you were awake. It's almost as if there is a volume control on our senses, and the volume gets turned down when we sleep, particularly in the REM stage of sleep.

So, what all this means is that, as you are getting deeper and deeper in trance, at a certain point, your body literally falls asleep, although your mind has stayed awake. At this point, your mind has literally been cut off (for the most part) from sensations of touch and movement coming in from your body. However, and this is very important, you still continue to feel a body and still continue to feel as if this body is moving. It is these sensations of a body that occur after you have fallen asleep that I was calling "kinesthetic sensations" in DO_OBE. In fact, a more realistic term to refer to these sensations is "kinesthetic hallucinations" for these are not true input from the nerves in your body. These are sensations created by your brain when the real input from the body is being inhibited. In other words, these are hallucinations of bodily sensations. And these are what you want to learn to recognize as an indicator of how deep you are in trance.

Again, for most of the people that write me, when they describe "feeling vibrations", they are referring to actually input from their body, and the fact that they are feeling their body indicates that they are still wide awake. And concentrating on these vibrations will only reinforce keeping you awake. So, the bottom line is, if you feel these vibrations, it is probably an indication that your body is not tired enough to go into trance. And if you continue focusing on these vibrations, it will only keep you awake and prevent you from projecting.

So, I hope these ideas about kinesthetic sensations (or actually from here on out I'll refer to these as "kinesthetic hallucinations") and feeling vibrations are a little clearer to you readers. Hopefully people won't get as hung up on this.

Now, to wrap up this discussing of kinesthetic hallucinations, again, these are important indicators of how deep your trance is. And what I have been telling people is that the best way to learn about these kinesthetic hallucinations is to pay careful attention to what it feels like when you fall asleep at night. This is actually a very simple exercise and is not something I mentioned in DO_OBE. When you go to bed at night, simply pay attention to what it feels like as you fall asleep. Don't try to project or anything. Just pay attention to what it feels like as you drift off to sleep. And indeed that is what you will feel: as if you are drifting, or sinking, or getting heavy. You want to learn what these sensations are and how they feel because you will feel these kinds of things every time you try to project by going into trance.

So, I hope that is clearer now!

Next topic: hypnagogic images. I get a lot of letters from people about the hypnagogic images. To remind the reader, hypnagogia is the state of consciousness that lies in-between waking and sleeping. When you are in the hypnagogic state, you may see hypnagogic images. Hypnagogic images are crystal clear visual perceptions. You may see faces, or trees, or landscapes, or abstract images that are hard to describe with words.

Now, as you practice the trance method, and your trance gets deeper and deeper, you may or may not see hypnagogic images. People write me and are concerned when they try to go into trance and they do not see any hypnagogic images. They wonder if they are doing something wrong when they don't see these images. Again, I simply want to make this crystal clear: you may or may not see these images. Seeing hypnagogic images is not a requirement for projecting by trance. As I said in DO_OBE, if you do see them, then this indicates that you are getting deeper into trance (as a matter of fact, for you physiologically inclined readers, I have read that the hypnagogic state tends to occur during stages 1 and 2 of nonREM sleep). But if you do not see these images, it doesn't mean you are doing something wrong. Its ok not to see hypnagogic images as you go deeper into trance on your way to projecting.

Again, I hope that this clarifies this point.

Finally, there is one last thing I want to discuss, and this is: when is it a good time to practice going into trance? Now, this is not something I discussed in DO_OBE. This is not something I knew when I wrote DO_OBE. But as I have studied more about all this, particularly about the physiology of sleep, its become very clear when its the best time to try to go into trance. And here it is:

The best time to try to project using the trance method is in the early morning, preferably 15-30 minutes before you would normally wake up.

The worst time to try to project using the trance method is in the night when you are going to bed.

Let me explain why this is.

Again, remember what we are talking about here: An astral projection/OBE/lucid dream involves taking your waking consciousness into the dream world. To do this via trance, you are trying to keep your mind awake while, at the same time, letting your body fall asleep. So, the key thing about the trance method is keeping your mind awake and carrying it across the border, so to speak, into the dream world.

Well, the simple fact is, when you go to bed at night, you are tired from your day's activities. And you are also tired because your brain is intrinsically programmed to fall asleep in a rhythmical fashion. So, if you try to project via trance at night, you are, in effect, trying to swim upstream, or fighting an uphill battle. Your body wants to fall asleep at night, and so does your mind. Its an inherent rhythm built into your body. You need sleep and you need rest. And, for God only knows what reason, true sleep and

rest require you to lose your lucidity. Everything in your body and brain is conspiring against your intentions to keep your lucidity intact when you go to bed at night. For all these reasons, trying to project, via the trance method, when you fall asleep at night is a BAD idea.

On the other hand, as I said above, what you can do when you fall asleep at night is pay attention to what it feels like as you fall off to sleep. Do not try to maintain your lucidity. Just simply pay attention and try to remember the sensations you are feeling as you fall asleep. This is one constructive use of falling asleep at night.

Conversely, there are reasons why trying to project via trance in the morning is much more efficient. First, your body, brain and mind are rested by morning. Therefore, if you try to go into trance in the A.M., you are not fighting against the needs of your body. A second factor is that, when you first wake up, you are still drowsy. This is a fact all of us know first hand. And this can be used to your advantage when trying to project via trance. From the point of view of getting up out of bed and starting your day, being drowsy is a bad thing. But from the point of view of trying to project, being drowsy is a head start on going into trance. When you are drowsy you are already deeply relaxed and your body will fall asleep quite easily. All you need to do then to go into trance after waking in the morning is to keep your mind focused and alert (i.e. lucid) as you drift back off to sleep.

Interestingly enough, this is something I have quite instinctively done all along. The fact is, the vast bulk of my projections, including most everyone in DO_OBE, occurred in the morning shortly after waking from my nights sleep.

The procedure is simple. Set your alarm to wake up a little early, maybe 15-30 minutes early (of course, this presupposes you have time in the morning to project, and don't have to worry about such things as going off to work). Then, when you wake, go and go to the bathroom, because this is something you'll have to do (as if none of us don't know that!). Then, you may want to occupy yourself in some light mental activity for about 10-15 minutes, usually reading. I used to get up, go to the bathroom, then read books about projecting for 10 minutes, then lay back down and try to project.

Now, in fairness, although this is the way I have done things since 1987, I never really appreciated the significance of approaching projecting this way. The light bulb clicked on in my head when I had read an article by Stephen LaBerge which describes this exact approach to projecting/lucid dreaming. So, credit needs to be put where credit is due. And again, the things I am describing are practically identical to Dr. LaBerge's method called WILD.

Finally, there is one more important reason I am aware of why trying to project in the A.M. is more efficient. This has to do with the nature of the sleep cycle we go through several times each night. As I mentioned in the last column, and as many of you may know, there are 5 phases to the sleep cycle, and the entire cycle itself lasts about 90 minutes. The 5 phases are called: stage 1, stage 2, stage 3, stage 4 and REM. It turns out that early in the night, after just going to bed, the bulk of the first 90 minute sleep cycle is taken up by stages 1-4, and the REM stage is very short in duration (maybe 10 minutes out of 90). But as the night progresses, stages 1-4 shorten, and REM lengthens in duration. So, by the early

morning, after 4 or 5 sleep cycles, REM accounts for maybe 45 minutes of the entire sleep cycles. And again, the key link here is that it is during REM that dreams and lucid dreams (or OBEs/astral projections) occur. So, what this all amounts to is that, for reasons still unknown to brain scientists, your brain can get into the REM stage much easier in the early morning than in the night, and this will greatly facilitate you having a trance induced projection (or WILD - which ever term you prefer).

Ok, so now I'm done for now talking about practical stuff related to the trance method of achieving OBEs/projections/lucid dreams. I'd like to conclude, still on the note of practicality - but not the practicality of going into trance, but the practicality of which ideas you use to conceptualize the projection/OBE/lucid dream experience - by making the following observation.

Since I've started writing these columns, I've clearly been espousing a more scientific view that sees this experience as a lucid dream and not dwelling on the occult view of astral projection. This shift in viewpoint has real practical consequences, which is why I have shifted in the first place. None of this is philosophical speculation (i.e. read "hot air"). We are discussing something very real and repeatable. The scientific view that sees this experience as a lucid dream has very practical consequences, many of which were outlined above. For example, sleep researchers revealed that the sleep cycle exists. Dr. LaBerge's work has revealed that projections/lucid dreams occur during the REM phase of the sleep cycle. These scientific observations allow for the practical advice that attempting to project in the morning, upon waking, will be more effective than trying to project at night when falling asleep. There is nothing in the occult view of astral projection that would allow us to come to this practical conclusion. This is only one example of the strength of the scientific view over the occult world view.

And this also illustrates how what we believe and know affects how we act. Since the theme of this column revolves around practicality, I want to just conclude with the thought that what ideas we do or do not accept have practical consequences, and that some ideas are more practical than other ideas. The truth is, the main reason I have shifted away from occult views and towards scientific views is because the scientific views are more practical. The scientific ideas allow us to act more efficiently and to get things done. And as well, there are mountains of evidence that support the scientific ideas. In contrast, the occult ideas are cute fairy tales - still of value I believe, for reasons I will go into in a future column, but not as of such direct value as the scientific views of this altered state we are discussing.

So, gang, I'm outta here. Good luck with your attempts to get into the dream world lucid! Talk to you all soon!

Don

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Hi folks! Its been a while since I've written a Plane-Talk column. What I'd like to do this time around is focus on the question: what is the dream world? For afterall, in our dreams and our lucid dreams (or OBEs or astral projections, or whatever we wish to call them) we really appear to be somewhere. In our dreams we are in places; we move through landscapes - sometimes of a mundane character, sometimes of a bizarre and surrealistic character. Whatever the forms they may take, what is clear is that when we dream we are somewhere. What I'd like to discuss is some of the ideas I've been kicking around about just what this somewhere really is when we talk about being in our dreams.

In DO_OBE., I put forth the idea that the world of our dreams are the planes of nature described by occultists, particularly of the Theosophical variety such as Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater. In fact, by the end of this article, I hope to illustrate how naive of a viewpoint this is. As you readers of this column know, I have been focusing more and more on scientific explanations of the phenomena of lucid dreaming/OBEs/astral projection, and this way of thinking sees these experiences as being products of our brain. As I have allowed my mind to open up to this scientific, and biological, viewpoint - and the body of evidence that supports such a viewpoint - the question has occurred to me: if indeed our dreams and lucid dreams are products of our brains, then how is it our brains can create the realistic, complex and detailed worlds we move through in our dreams and lucid dreams?

In pursuit of an answer to this question, I have surveyed a fairly large amount of literature about how our brains work. Initially, I was very skeptical that one could explain the environments, landscapes and places of our dreams in terms of how the brain operates. However, after much reading and learning, my initial skepticism has been replaced with some inkling of an understanding of how the brain indeed can create within itself whole worlds through which we, as personalities, move, live and have our being, not only in our dreams, but while we are awake as well.

As with most questions we ask, there is a huge philosophical component to this issue of the nature of the dream world. The philosophical questions revolve around this: we take our waking experience as our point of departure when we talk about our experiences in the dream world. And in our waking experience we move through this physical world, a world which is revealed to our conscious awareness through the agency of our senses. Our senses include seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting, which are the five commonly known senses. But we have other senses in our body too: we can sense temperature, pain, up and down (i.e. gravity), the motion of our bodies and limbs, we can feel

vibrations, and pressure and there are many unconscious senses constantly monitoring the internal organs of our bodies. It is through all of these sensory modalities that we know of the world we inhabit while we are awake. And the most important point is that we take all of this very for granted. We simply assume that the world that is revealed to us through our senses exists as an objective world that exists outside of us, and we assume that we perceive this world truly as it is.

Now these really are important philosophical questions that have plagued philosophers throughout the centuries. Philosophers like Kant and Descartes, and many others, have worried about the reliability of our senses for revealing to our minds about the nature of the world, and they have worried about the seeming objectivity of the ideas we create to describe the world in which we find ourselves. What I find of great interest is that asking the question "what is the world of dreams?" has an awful lot to do with these philosophical questions.

Again, we assume the world of waking is real, solid and objective. And we move through this world as we live our lives in time, never giving any thought at all (unless of course you are a brain scientist!) to the marvelous bio-machine in our heads - our brains - that make life as we know it possible. But the fact is, it is because of the properties of our brain that we can perceive the world of our waking experience. It is because of the properties of our brain that there is continuity in time to our waking experience. Even though every day of being awake is interrupted by a night of sleep and of dreams, we wake in the morning and continue on with our waking life, continue the events of yesterday, looking forward to the events of tomorrow. The continuity in time of our waking lives is due to the fact that our brain stores memories of the things it experiences. If our brains did not store memories, then we would not remember what happened to us, nor would we remember the things we were planning on doing and the things we strive to achieve and for which we hope.

In fact, there are types of brain damage that people can suffer where their brain loses the ability to form memories. Such people live constantly in the present. They do not remember yesterday, nor do they remember to plan for tomorrow.

Likewise, as we take our memories for granted to a large extent in our day to day lives, so too do we take our brains ability to perceive the world of our waking experience for granted. Don't you ever wonder just how it is that you can open your eyes and see the world? Seeing happens quite automatically. You don't have to do anything, it just happens. Nor did you have to learn to see. The ability to see is built into your body; built into your eyes and the nerve connections between your eyes and your brain. You were born with the ability to see - it is a gift that God has given you. Although the how of seeing never enters into our minds as we go about our day-to-day business (again, unless you are a brain scientist who studies vision!), the fact is, there is a very complex set of processes that underlie our ability to see. What I want to do now is explain a little bit about the hidden and unseen (one could even call them "occult") processes that are happening every time we look at the world.

First off, what allows us to see is light. Light exists in the world of our waking experience, and it exists as waves of infinitesimally small particles called photons. These photons/light waves move around through space at massive speeds - the speed of light is the fastest speed of anything we know of - and

these photons/light waves bounce off of things that are made of matter. They either bounce off of material things, or they go right through them depending on the frequency of the light waves and the nature of the matter they encounter.

Now, as these light waves bounce off of things, some of the light waves enter our eyes. And inside of our eyeballs, the whole back wall of our eye ball is made of cells that respond to the light waves. These cells make up a region of the eye called the retina. And the cells of the retina that detect light waves are called rods and cones. The rods and cones do not respond to all light waves, but only to a very narrow range of light waves that we call visible light. This range of light waves is visible because we see them, and we see them because the rods and cones can detect them.

To make a very long and complex story short, when visible light enters the retina, the retina sends nerve impulses to the brain. These nerve impulses are not pictures in any sense at all; they are patterns of electricity. So, our retinas convert light waves which have bounced off of, or were emitted from objects around us, to patterns of electricity inside our brains.

So, if the eye sends patterns of electricity into our brains, then how is it we can see? Or what is seeing? Well, frankly, if I could answer this question, I'd be famous. The fact is, no one is quite sure of how the patterns of electricity that leave the eye and enter the brain get converted into this subjective mental phenomena we call "seeing". However, some of the more clever scientists who grapple with these issues have taken an interesting tact to the problem. Instead of wondering how patterns of electricity get converted to the things we actually are seeing in our consciousness, these scientists have dealt with the issue by stating that what we call "seeing" is actually patterns of electricity coursing through our brains, and actually, only through very specific parts of our brains.

And the fact is, there is good evidence to support this viewpoint. You can imagine that if a person's eyes got damaged, then that person would become blind, and indeed this is the case. However, it turns out that people can become blind by having the parts of their brain that are involved with seeing become damaged, even in their eyes are perfectly intact. In this case, the person has brain damage, not eye damage, but they become blind nonetheless. Clearly then, this supports the notion that what we call "seeing" involves patterns of electricity moving through specific parts of the brain; if those parts of the brain get damaged, the person can no longer see - they are blind.

Now, everyone reading this is using a computer. Many of you know that the computer screen you are looking at is composed of small dots of light called "pixels". By combining many pixels together on the surface of the TV tube of your computer monitor, it creates a picture. It turns out that our brain does a similar thing with vision. Our retina is made up of many millions of cells - the rods and cones - and each of these is like a pixel. Now, each pixels on your computer screen has its place on the surface of the computer screen. The pixels form a two-dimensional grid and the location of each pixel is defined by stating its place on this 2-D grid. Likewise, the retina is also a 2-D grid of cells and each cell has a definite place on this grid. And when a particular cell senses light, it - by quite indirect means - sends a little nerve impulse out of the eye. The impulses go to very specific regions of the brain - to a part of the brain called the visual cortex - in such a way that each region of the visual cortex corresponds to a

specific location on the retina. Or stated another way, there is a region (actually several of them) in the visual cortex of our brain which is organized the same way the retina of the eye is. What this means is that when a particular region of the retina senses light, this causes patterns of electricity to enter very specific regions of the visual cortex. Therefore, when you see something in the upper left corner of your visual field, this image activates cells in a very specific region of your retina, and in turn, these retinal cells activate very specific regions of your visual cortex which correspond to the upper left part of the space at which you are looking.

What this means is that you really do not "see" the thing in the upper left corner of your visual field until the cells in the visual cortex of your brain become active. It is the activation of these cells in your brain that causes you to "see", not the activation of the cells in the retina.

Again, this all happens totally automatically. It does not matter whether or not we know that all this is going on because it goes on anyway. It has been the cleverness and ingenuity of brain scientists that they have figured out that all this stuff is going on "behind the scenes" when we perform the simple act of looking at something. And there is much more going on as well, but because this is not an essay dedicated to visual processing, I will not go into any more of the details.

The important idea at this point is that there is literally a MAP of visual space inside a particular part of your brain. And when this map of visual space gets activated it creates in us the conscious experience of seeing. What this idea means is that if you could somehow artificially stimulate these parts of the brain with electricity, it would cause the person to see something that is not truly there (which is the definition of a hallucination).

Now, these ideas apply to all of our sensory modalities. Hence, you have an audio map of space in your brain, and when it gets activated, you experience the subjective sensation of hearing. You have a tactile (touch) map of your body in your brain, and when it gets activated, you experience the subjective sensation of touch on the surface of your body. You have maps in your brain of all your sensory modalities, and when these maps get activated, it creates in your conscious awareness, a perception of that sensory modality - be it touch, hearing, balance, temperature, pain, etc. etc.

For you clever readers out there, it should be quite obvious where my argument is going. All that I have discussed above can only mean one thing: the world you perceive to be "out there" is not "out there" at all. It is, in fact inside your brain. The world that is seemingly outside of us is not outside of us at all: it is inside our brains. That the world "out there" seems to be outside of us is an illusion created by our brains. Our brains CREATE the world that we perceive and of which we are aware, and this means that "out there" is actually inside our heads.

And this gets back to the philosophical stuff I mentioned at the start of the article. Months ago, when my curiosity lead me to the question "how does the brain create the world of our dreams?" I was assuming that our brain constructed the world of our dreams, but did not construct the world of our waking experience. I naively assumed that the waking world was totally objective in some sense independent from the action of the brain. However, what I realized as I learned more and more about how the brain

works is that the brain actually CREATES the world of our WAKING experience. Again, the world we perceive to be outside of our bodies is NOT outside of our bodies at all. The outside world of waking is inside our brains. ALL OF OUR PERCEPTIONS OCCUR IN OUR BRAINS.

However, these ideas do not imply that the world is a construct of our imaginations as the ancient Greek Sophist philosophers believed. There is an objective world that exists outside of us and within which we live, move and have our being. However, what I am saying is that ALL WE CAN KNOW OF THIS WORLD IS THE REPRESENTATION OF IT CREATED BY OUR BRAIN. I'll elaborate on this point ahead.

So, let's get back to the story of how the brain works. The key idea is that the brain creates REPRESENTATIONS of the world within itself. That is the function of our brains: to create representations of reality. So, naturally enough, the question arises: how come the representations created by the brain seem to so accurately mirror the reality that is outside of us? Well, the answer is simple: because of our senses. The easiest way to think about it is that our senses are like cookie cutters. Cookie cutters MOLD cookie dough into specific shapes. Likewise, our senses - when they are active - MOLD our brain's ability to represent reality into specific "shapes". The senses are MOLDS or TEMPLATES that determine the shape of perceptions that the brain will generate in our awareness.

Now, so far, all I have said applies to the case when we are awake. And again, the irony is that the waking world we know in our awareness is actually patterns of electricity in our brain, which are shaped by our senses.

However, what happens when we sleep?

Again, to make a long and complex story short, when we sleep, the ability of our senses to mold our brain's ability to represent reality within it are turned way down.

If you will recall, there are two main phases to sleep: the nonREM phase and the REM phase. It is now known and well established that we dream during the REM phase of sleep. Dreams sometimes occur during nonREM sleep but are much less frequent than during REM sleep. So, it would seem that during nonREM sleep, the ability of the brain to generate representations is itself turned down.

What all this leads too is this conclusion: DREAMS ARE THE BRAIN GENERATING REPRESENTATIONS OF REALITY DURING REM SLEEP, WHEN THE ABILITY OF THE SENSES TO "MOLD" THE BRAIN'S REPRESENTATIONAL ACTIVITY IS TURNED DOWN.

In other words, dreams are patterns of electricity being generated by the brain during REM sleep that result in conscious perceptions in exactly the same fashion that occurs during waking.

Now, there are many differences between waking perceptions and dream perceptions. The most important is that our senses are turned on when we are awake, but turned off when we dream and this has important consequences. When the senses are on, they MOLD the representational function of the

brain. When the senses are off, as in REM sleep, the brain generates perceptual representations of reality that are NOT molded by sensory input.

Are there other factors in the brain that help mold the representations generated during dreams? Yes, absolutely. The most important is probably our motivational state: our wishes, drives, desires, and other similar emotional factors. Our memories are also important determinants in forming our dreams. And there are probably unconscious factors that help mold what we consciously perceive during dream states. However, right now I am not going to dwell on this topic of what molds the contents of our dreams - this I will save for another column.

The function of our memories is also different between being awake and being in a dream. We all know that we don't remember dreams as well as we remember our waking experiences. This points to a big difference in the function of the brain between waking and dreaming. However, what is the same between waking and dreaming is that the brain is generating representations of reality that enter our consciousness as perceptions of a world "out there".

So, we come back to the main question of this article: what is the dream world? Well, according to all I said above, the dream world is in fact patterns of electricity within our brain, in those regions of the brain that create our perceptions of sensations. The world of dreams are worlds - actually, perceptions of worlds - generated by the brain in the ABSENCE of the senses molding the brain's ability to generate perceptions.

So, is this all mundane? Does this destroy the old occult views of the planes of nature? What the ideas I've presented above force us to do is not be so naive in our thinking. The idea that dreams are patterns of electricity in the brain does destroy any simplistic and naive notions that the planes of nature exist as objective worlds analogous to an objective physical world. If you understood what I said above, you now appreciate that even the world of our waking experience is NOT objective in any simple sense. The world of our waking experience is a REPRESENTATION inside our brains - one that is MOLDED by the action of the senses. Hence, the whole idea of objectivity becomes hopelessly naive from this point of view. If objectivity exists, it must be a notion that includes the fact that what we perceive is only a REPRESENTATION - a bunch of patterns of electricity - INSIDE THE BRAIN. So, not only are the old occult notions destroyed, but so are many nonoccult notions. What is destroyed is a simplistic and naive assumption that what we perceive can be taken at face value. We now know enough about the hidden and invisible (i.e. occult) process that underlie our ability to perceive that we can no longer take what we perceive at face value.

So what else is there if we cannot take our perceptions at face value? What this all points to is an extremely subtle interplay between our conscious thoughts and the automatic ability of the brain to generate representations of reality. It is, afterall, our conscious mind - and the ideas and habit it contains - that gives meaning to the perceptions generated by the brain. Thus, the Sophists (who believed that reality is created by the mind) were half right: our ideas give meaning to the perceptions generated by the brain and so in this very indirect way "create" reality. Just as the brain will generate representations

of reality in our conscious awareness in spite of what we think and believe (i.e. culture), contrawise, we will give whatever meaning we give to our perceptions whether it is "intrinsically correct" or not.

So, this all points to something much deeper than the standard fair of traditional science, philosophy or occultism. But its not a depth with no precedence. Again, we are lead back to the mystical insights of the ages that point to transcendence of the mundane and the discovery of a transcendental essence behind mere appearances.

Next time, we'll get into this topic some more and look a little more closely at the factors that mold the contents of our dreams, whether they be lucid or not. For now, the take home message is that the world of dreams are patterns of electricity in our brains, but just the same, so is the waking world. In some future column, we'll dwell on the ramifications of these ideas.

Until next time, happy day, everybody!

Don