

**WANTED: New Mapmakers of the Mind****Robert A. Monroe***Monroe Institute of Applied Sciences, Faber, VA*

It was with great pleasure that I was made somewhat aware of the scope of exploration taking place under the label of lucid dreaming. The dictionary definition is certainly less than adequate: LUCID, bright, clear, transparent, sane, easily understood; DREAM, sensations, thoughts, images passing through a sleeping person's mind, fanciful vision of the conscious mind, a fond hope or aspiration, to imagine as possible, anything so lovely, transitory and charming as to seem "dreamlike". The very little I know of lucid dreaming indicates it is apparently far removed from conventional Webster.

When one approaches the out-of-body state, ordinary definitions become even more tenuous. The unabridged dictionary doesn't bother listing the phrase even in abbreviated form. The closest is OUT-OF-DOORS, which conceivably might be used to describe OOB activity symbolically, with appropriate stretching and twisting.

So much for main stream thought, which represents at least 99.99% of the world population. For this overwhelming majority, such states as lucid dreaming and out-of-body don't exist. Any reference to them is met with a response ranging from tolerant disbelief to superior skepticism. It seems important to remember this when one becomes intensely excited over significant results in a research project. If there is indeed "something of value" surfacing in your work effort, what then? It has value only if put into constructive application. If it remains forever in the laboratory or as a research paper, such value is at best very limited. An interesting phenomenon, perhaps an anomaly, not much more.

I cannot speak with the least authority as to lucid dreaming. My fragmented information related to the work being done in the field provides me with only minor comparisons with the out-of-body state. We are somewhat more familiar with OOBs through communication with some 20,000-plus individuals who have experienced it, ongoing studies in our own facility, and of course my own personal activities through the past 27 years. Those who have actively participated in these efforts have inescapably and conclusively accepted the reality of the out-of-body experience. The protocols, methodology, and measurement systems may be different from conventional scientific process, by necessity. Physiological parameters are not necessarily the major gauge of non-physical events. It is much like trying to measure and analyze electricity with a coffee cup. A new language must be learned along with a change in overview. The observer does indeed affect the experiment, for example. He is the experiment along with the subject.

For the strict purpose of establishing a baseline of sorts, here is a consensus view of the common characteristics found in an out-of-body state:

1. Complete consciousness, i.e., the ability to think syllogistically, to access memory, to experience emotion, to process information input, to think reflectively and intuitively—all without the support mechanism of a physical body and physical sensory stimulants.
2. Perception of both physical and non-physical environments and activity from a perspective not available through the physical senses of the participant, in a manner that replicates in part but is not limited to that received through the physical senses.
3. Physiological life signs: the body exhibits a lowering of temperature to an observable maximum of two degrees, a drop in blood pressure to a steady level at least ten below normal for the subject, loss of muscle tone, average 11% lowering of pulse rate, slow, extremely shallow breathing, all similar to those found in delta sleep. EEG patterns, initially, are similar to REM sleep with prominent theta added, evolving into high amplitude theta in the 4-6 HZ range, and 1.5-2 HZ in delta. Subject participant experiences no awareness of physical body functions such as heartbeat, breathing, or typical physical body functions such as heartbeat, breathing, or typical physical sensory perception. Prime indicators of change to OB state, provided other modes are present, is a shift in electrical DC polarity as measured between head and foot of subject participant.
4. NEAR REACHES activity (current earth time-space): Subject-participant is able to move willfully to any desired destination at a selected speed ranging from one foot per hour to speed of light, or greater. In close areas, he can observe his physical body in the position he left it, from any direction or viewpoint to which he moves. He can pass through matter such as walls, buildings, mountains, etc., without effort or effect upon himself or the object. However, if he moves slowly enough, he is able to “feel” and identify the actual texture and structure of such matter. In no cases in such consensus have there been instances where matter has been changed or altered by a subject-participant, nor has any time-space event been significantly affected by such OB presence. Communication with persons physically awake and active in their bodies is primarily limited to contact and conversation with an apparent portion of their consciousness not available to or with awareness by the physical-awake self. The subject participant retains a form generally similar to that of his physical body, except that it appears near-transparent upon examination. Such replicate is somewhat subject to gravitic fields, as it drifts slowly to the floor or ground if released into a relaxed unmotivated state. A factor resembling surface tension prevents it from drifting further. Subject participant usually remains fully cognizant that he still has a physical body and the location thereof.
5. FAR REACHES activity (environments other than current earth time-space) freed of the conventional conceptual constraints of time, upon separation from the physical, the subject participant is able to “move” at speeds beyond comprehension to a given destination – provided he has an identity (familiarity, address, etc.) as a homing point or is accompanied by one who does. A quick sense of motion or a blurring of perception are the only indicators of the process. Occasionally there is the feeling of the tunnel and emerging into light as often reported in the near death experience. Most important, there is an immediate awareness that this is the modality or ambience that is the normal medium for OB action rather than the gray dullness of NEAR REACHES. Perception changes drastically. Here a full spectrum of interaction emerges of which physical sensory

replication is but a part. Communication to and from others is total, without reduction to words or symbols. Conduct within or upon an environment, as such, is limited simply by the will and knowledge of the operator. These two factors - communication and conduct - are the most difficult elements of adjustment required of the neophyte OB participant. Compounding the problem is the probability that many are so overwhelmed by the impact of such reality as to become lost in states of emotional and religious ecstasy, leaving only a few remaining shreds of their highly-prized objective consciousness to cope with the input overload. Some, perhaps most, are never able to do so in spite of repeated attempts.

In such states, the OB subject participant usually begins to “forget” that he still possesses a physical body, so great is his interest and concentration in this form of being. Either a distress signal from the body or help from another is typical method that brings him back to his here-now physical existence. If he bothers to examine his “body”, it is no longer humanoid in form. It can resemble a drop of liquid, a sphere, a seething cloud, or whatever he desires. It is much like gelatin removed from a mold. No longer rigidly restrained by fixed shape and temperature, it slowly begins to return to its original state.

From this perspective, it becomes quite apparent that a gray area exists in the cataloging of lucid dreaming and the out-of-body state. If lucidity denotes consciousness, then lucidity also is a prime characteristic of the OB state. Therefore, one might theorize that there is the non-conscious OBE which is simply not in available memory. For most, it is impossible to recall an ordinary waking physical activity that took place a week in the past that has no strong emotional or attention focusing overtones. Thus there may be dreams and lucid dreams, OBEs and lucid OBEs.

The most common differentiation appears to be that of construct. The lucid dreamer awakens to find himself within a dream which is internal in origin. He can at will obliterate or change both setting, participants, and action. Perhaps he can pre program his dream and insert himself into it. The willful OB practitioner produces the OB state, then moves to a desired destination. He has no control over the reality of such location. He can not change its content, texture, the persons involved, nor significantly affect the activity in progress. He can leave the site and return to it, but he cannot affect its existence any more than a tourist can erase the Washington Monument before which he stands.

Thus the OB participant can move only to a destination known to him either through direct information or by an “address” provided to him in a form similar to that used by the remote viewer, such as latitude and longitude co-ordinates, a photograph, a name. A third target source may well be a location visited previously by OB during sleep and not a part of his conscious memory.

Another point of difference may be that of perception. Does the lucid dreamer have the ability to perceive selectively or in a composite manner as does the OB operator? With the

expansion of interest in lucid dreaming, there must be considerable data available for a comparative overview. Further, does the lucid dreamer retain any awareness of his physical body during the experience? There are many more such questions that surface within an incomplete data base.

A significant difference may lie in the nature of consciousness utilized by the lucid dreamer versus the OB practitioner. Again, from a limited knowledge, the lucid dreamer succeeds in exercising total control over self and situation as internally generated. The consciousness found in the proficient OB state is first of all aware of the duality aspect. He sublimates and/or detaches from that part which is physical. In so doing, he releases a significant portion of his consciousness related to the part of his being. He must adjust to this lessening without a sense of loss or disorientation. Thereafter, his attention is focused externally rather than internally. Thus he is no longer limited to his own creations, concepts, and distortions. He may misunderstand and distort what he does perceive due to such limitations that he takes with him. The ideal is to explore the OB state with total clarity and thus experience completely the freedom that it implies. As with all ideals, it is a goal to strive for but is very rarely reached. Getting out of our individual belief system boxes, even momentarily, is indeed a tough and rocky process.

A great part of the gray area of identification may stem from initial or spontaneous lucid dreams and out-of-body experiences. If not informed in the area, certainly the magnitude of the event could trigger any number of misconceptions and mislabeling. First and foremost, identification in itself would be problematical if there were no one present to pinpoint the symptoms - if the person had the courage to report such a bizarre experience at all. Moreover, those of us who may claim to be the identifiers have only begun to formulate premises and theories which are subject to revision as we ourselves learn.

From one overview, the work in lucid dreaming offers at the most an exciting opportunity to explore and understand the human mind-consciousness far beyond our present levels. Somewhere in the middle it offers the promise of a very effective tool in psychoanalysis. At the least, it may be an excellent means to rid the prospective OB operator of the many earthbound anxieties and fears that hamper his development. Proficiency in the OB state complements the lucid dream quite nicely by offering the opportunity to quest beyond the limits of human experience to find - who knows?

Therefore: it becomes increasingly evident that the old charts of the human psyche, dreams, consciousness, thought, are badly in need of revision. More and more newly considered aspects of the maze fit less and less the old patterns. What this world needs is some new road maps for mind-consciousness. Now if there were some bright young map-makers...

Original source: *Lucidity Letter* 4(2), December, 1985, p. 47.