

## **Book Preview: Chrysalis: An Anthology on Out-of-Body Experiences**

**Thomas Metzinger and Ernst Waelti, Editors (Publisher in Negotiation)**  
**(E = Chapter in English; G = Chapter in German)**

### Introduction

An aim of this book is to bring together different approaches to understanding the Out-of-Body-Experience. It tries to interweave the different threads into a colorful carpet - without dogmatically fixing any kind of pattern. It could be the beginning of a new discussion of one of the most remarkable phenomena in parapsychology; a discussion that is open, uniting all constructive forces. Amongst the authors are prominent scientists from all over the world as well as philosophers and people who talk about their own experiences.

"Chrysalis" addresses believers as well as nonbelievers. It provides a rich, stimulating source of information for scientifically interested readers as well as for people who want to gain a better understanding of their own experiences in altered states of consciousness. Although having a high standard it is not at all restricted to academic circles. It will be valuable for all those interested in spiritual experiences and expansion of awareness.

### Changing Models of Reality and the Out-of-Body State (E)

Susan J. Blackmore

Brain and Perception Laboratory, University of Bristol.

What is altered in an altered state of consciousness? I shall suggest that it is a person's model of the world and that by looking at models or representations, rather than physiology, we shall better come to understand altered states.

Most of the time our consciousness is dominated by a model based on sensory input but if this is disrupted it may be replaced by some other model. Since the system always strives to model input it will try to get back to normal, but if input is inadequate or noisy it may not succeed. Its next best option may be to build a model of the actual situation from memory and imagination. If this is sufficiently convincing it will take over as the dominant model and seem "real". Memory models are often built as though in a bird's eye view. If such a model takes over then an OBE has occurred.

By looking at altered states of consciousness in this way we can better understand the nature of consciousness and its changes, and we can see the OBE as just one of many possible states which can occur when input ceases to dominate. We may also view some occult and magical teachings in a new light.

### Out-of-body State as a Central Phenomenon of Extrasensory Perception (G)

Reinhard Fischer

Kaufbeuren, West Germany

This contribution illustrates the difference between clairvoyance and out-of-the-body experience. The author maintains that the latter is an independent phenomenon because:

-Report on the investigations of the "Wolfsburger Time Travel". A time-transcending out-of-body experience into the past is presented. The experience was confirmed by a neutral institution.

-A missing child is traced by OBE. During the search the special mechanism of out-of-body perception becomes clear.

-The OBE which exhibits some parallels to modern particle physics and leads to the question: What is reality?

-A real astral projection takes the author to another transphysical vibrational plane of human existence. He suggests that our consciousness may undergo a metamorphosis after death. In his comments the author rejects the reproach of dramatizing the paranormal basis of OBEs.

-The difference between normal dreams, lucid dreams and OBEs is discussed vis-a-vis the author's considering his own experiences.

"The Synaesthetic Model of the Out-of-Body-Experience" (E)

Harvey J. Irwin

University of New England, Australia

Harvey Irwin proposes a synaesthetic model of the Out-of-Body-Experience. If through a certain constellation of factors attention loses contact to somatic processes, the notion of the disembodied self is mediated to consciousness in the form of a diffuse somaesthetic image of awareness statically floating somewhere outside the physical body. Typically absorption in this image instigates a synaesthetic mapping of the initial synaesthetic image onto other sensory domains, particularly the visual one and often also the kinesthetic mode. Many phenomenological features of the OBE can be appreciated within this framework.

Philosophical Aspects of Out-of-the-Body Experiences (G)

Thomas Metzinger

University in Frankfurt

In my contribution I am going to look at some typically wrong or meaningless questions which are often asked when discussing OBEs, as well as at a number of typical false and hasty conclusions from the empirical data. Also I want to relate the parapsychological discussion of OBEs to the philosophical discussion of the mind-body problem during the last thirty years, and try to find out if any of the relevant new groups of psychophysical theories (Identity theory, Interactionism, Functionalism, Supervenience) can be useful with regard to the problems that appear in the context of OBEs.

### Dreambody and Out-of-the-Body Experiences (E)

Arnold P. Mindell

Switzerland

This article will contain case reports in which people doing body work and dream work have experienced themselves in what they themselves refer to as out-of-the-body experiences. Empirical material along with its psychological implications will be presented. It is hoped that the out-of-the-body experiences will be understood as a part of body experience available to everybody, but without much access.

### Problems for the Theory of Perception Arising from the Study of Out-of-the- Body Experiences (E)

Celia Green

Institute for Psychophysical Research, Oxford, England

This article will begin with a review of the difficulties raised by cases of different types. There will also be a consideration of the least difficult type, in which the subject perceives the environment which he should be perceiving from the position of his physical body, but as if located at a different point of view. The difficulty of giving an account of the process by which the entire visual field is replaced by an alternative one will be considered. This in view of the fact that studies of imagery by psychologists have heretofore considered only relatively small and simple objects superimposed on the normal perceptual field. Furthermore the quantity of information that would have to be stored as memory for such a reproduction to be made is pointed to. Further difficulties arising from consideration of levels of arousal of the brain functions of the subject at the time will be presented as will the states of subjects at the time of reported experiences which vary between fully functional states of activity and complete unconsciousness. Difficulties arising from the combination of realistic and fictional elements in the same field of view will be touched upon. Finally, consideration of evidence for the presence of extra-sensory perception in out-of-the-body experiences will be offered.

### Imagery and Out-of-the-Body Experiences (E)

Charles McCreery

Institute for Psychophysical Research, Oxford, England

This paper discusses the possible relationships between out-of-body experiences (OBEs) and various normal and abnormal types of imagery. The author reviews the work of other researchers in this field, including that of Irwin and Blackmore which found little correlation between vividness of the degree of control over normal imagery and propensity for OBEs. The author also discusses the work of the Institute of Psychophysical Research, which consisted of the application of the Galton Imagery

Questionnaire to some 200 subjects reporting at least one OBE. In particular, he discusses the relationship of OBEs to eidetic imagery (the ability to project an image at will onto a blank surface such as a piece of paper). The author discusses the implication of these various pieces of research for the question of the physiology of OBEs, in particular the question of what area or mechanism in the brain mediates them.

First Things First: The Separationist Theory. (E)  
Janet Lee Mitchell  
Cottonwood, Arizona

OBE research at present seems to be focused on psychological theories of the phenomenon. In a way, these approaches tend to evade the most pressing question about the experience -- does anything leave the body? I will discuss techniques and procedures that have been used to examine the separationist theory and suggest methods for future work on this problem. I believe the separationist theory is easier to check experimentally and more efficient in expediting our work.

If an experimenter could work with an individual who has the OBE under control to some extent and believes some aspect travels across space, this would appear to be the more practical approach. Therefore, I encourage experimenters interested in the OBE to devise methods for validating the separationist aspect, along the lines of the Osiris and McCormick work with Al Tanous. Attempts to concurrently study the experient's physiology, spatial parameters, and PK effects, might also provide much needed data.

If, after conscientious effort and application of rigorous tests, it is determined that there is no detectable external component, our attentions can be well spent on the psychological approach. However, since we are defining the experience as out-of-body, I think it is imperative the the separationist theory be the first priority of investigation.

Ketamine and the Near-Death Experience (E) D.  
Scott Rogo  
Graduate School of Consciousness Studies, John F. Kennedy University

The Phenomenology that typically accompanies the near-death experience (NDE) is also sometimes a by-product of ketamine, an anesthetic used in both medical and recreational settings. Some surveys indicate that NDE- type ketamine hallucinations are quite common. The close parallels between some ketamine experiences and the NDE can be explained by a variety of conceptual models, including these: the NDE is a similar form of chemically induced hallucination; ketamine induces objective out-of-body experiences (OBEs); ketamine-linked NDEs are artifacts produced by expectancy and the hospital setting; or the NDE is an archetypal experience catalyzed under a variety of different situations. Each of these theories has explanatory advantages and disadvantages.

To be Reprinted from *Anabiosis - The Journal for Near-Death Studies*, Spring 1984, Vol.

4, No.1

Altered States of Consciousness: The White Spot on the Scientific Map of the World -  
Can Science Still Learn from Magic? (G)

Klaus Stich

Frankfurt, West Germany

This article compares the world picture of the scientist and the world picture of the magician by looking at magical techniques for the dissociation of consciousness from the physical body and modern psychological research into dreams. Stich argues against the uncritical use of magical models of consciousness and stresses the necessity to connect useful elements of both types of models to form an instrument capable of penetrating into what is according to his words 'the last great wilderness' of our planet - the human mind.

A Psychophysiological Study of Out-of-the-Body Experiences in a Selected Subject (E)

Charles T. Tart

University of California, Davis

A young woman who frequently had spontaneous out-of-the-body experiences was studied in a sleep laboratory for four nights. She reported several partial out-of-the-body experiences and two full ones. While the physiological data are limited by dependence on her retrospective report in correlating physiological pattern with the experience, it seems as if her out-of-the-body experiences occurred in conjunction with a non-dreaming, non-awake brain wave stage characterized by predominant slowed alpha activity from her brain and no activation of the autonomic nervous system. Two incidents occurring in the laboratory provide suggestive evidence that the out-of-the-body experience had parapsychological concomitants.

To be Reprinted from the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* Vol. 62 - January 1968 - No. 1

Out-of-the-Body Experience as an Aspect of Our Spiritual Potential (G)

Adalbert Toepper

Frankfurt, West Germany

In my contribution I would like to show that the out-of-the-body experience (OBE) is to be considered one of many extra-sensory phenomena. OBE reports are recorded on the one hand from the field of parapsychological research which is hampered by incalculable psychical factors and on the other hand from ordinary people. In my opinion we should pay attention to this latter source. Its richness is due to a spontaneity springing from a natural free will of our soul and its secret longings. Heavy buffets of fate may also promote spiritual development and, as a consequence, the ability of extra-

sensory perception, so that the attraction of subconscious longings seizes man like a storm which pushes open the windows and sets free his view of spiritual realms.

From this viewpoint I describe numerous diary-like recorded OBEs, visions precognitive dreams, etc. Some phenomena should not be considered separate from the out-of-body state since they are mutually dependent. Sometimes I also refer to the inspired knowledge of the mystics, when it can specifically explain the spiritual mechanism of extra-sensory abilities.

The Evolution of consciousness as a Way to Creative Freedom - From Dreamer to Warrior

Paul Tholey

Institut für Sportwissenschaften, University of Braunschweig

In part one of the article the basic theories offering an explanation for non-ordinary experiences, especially out-of-the-body-experiences (OBEs), in the waking, hypnagogic and lucid dreaming states are clarified using examples. It is established that in a OBE nothing leaves the physical body, but that a phenomenal (bodily or disembodied) ego leaves a phenomenal body which is only experienced as the physical body. If the misleading term OBE is still to be used, then it would seem advisable to use it only in a phenomenological context as just described.

In part two a series of hypnagogic techniques for the induction of OBEs are described - again using examples. There then follows a description of different types of OBEs which occur in lucid dreams. Examples are given to show that all phenomenological criteria (apart from those mentioned above) cited in literature on the subject are invalid, since experienced lucid dreamers can alter the form of their experience by manipulation so that it is arbitrary whether the criteria for an OBE are met or not. It is for example possible in a lucid dream to make one's body either solid or airy. In the latter case the body is able to penetrate walls, a characteristic feature of what is referred to by the occultists as the astral body. All our findings would seem to confirm the supposition that during an OBE nothing leaves the physical body.

Part three describes how to develop one's consciousness and personality by appropriate behavior in the inner world - i.e. attain creative freedom. This process is explained more fully in several examples which look at the warrior, whose battle is directed at his egocentredness. Allegorically speaking the warrior starts his way in the inner world with the confrontation with threatening creatures and situations. At last he progresses to rebirth via his meeting of death, i.e. to creative freedom in the inner and the outer world.

A Night Has Many Faces: Man a Multidimensional Being (G)

Ernst R. Waelti

Switzerland

My contribution describes two of my own OBEs which demonstrate that man

can simultaneously be conscious of two or more planes of existence, entering the psychic and spiritual realms of consciousness in the out-of-body state.

During the separation of the two bodies, entoptic phenomena (luminous patterns) on the retina were observed. In the light of these observations, I doubt if any psychological theory or model which posit that nothing leaves the body can explain every type of OBE. Instead of rehashing the question if OBEs represent a genuine mind-body separation, I focus on an explanatory model based on the concept of dissipative structures. The fundamental ideas of this concept were developed by Ilya Prigogine and his group. My attempt suggests that man may be a living system which can split into a continuum of experiences on different planes of reality.

### Out-of-Body State - 24 Hours Are a Long Day (G)

Werner Zurfluh

Basel, Switzerland

The acceptance of the so-called out-of-the-body experience (OBE) as a relevant factor of experience has far-reaching implications not only for theory of knowledge and science, but also for the individual personality and for society. Not until the colloquial dualism of wakefulness and sleep is critically considered, the momentous identification of the ego- consciousness with the waking state of the physical body is realized, and the concept of a multidimensional reality is accepted, can ego- consciousness be maintained as a continuous unity while falling asleep.

As a consequence we have to introduce criteria which may help a lucid ego to successfully define the plane of reality upon which it finds itself. This should be done without discrimination, confusion and redundancy.

The reproducibility of the out-of-the-body experience makes clear that there must be many planes of reality differing from one another and with distinctive laws. Only the ego remains as a continuous but not at all constant unity on all planes. All else changes. For ethical and even economical-political reasons, it is desirable that the ego assimilate and integrate all information directly available to it, not only from everyday life but also from the nightly sphere of experience.

### Talking of Social Relevance (G)

Winfried Paarmann

Berlin

The adventures of discovering the earth are now almost over and those of trying to make it a human place to live in have only just started. They can only come to a good end if we want this planet to be whole and peaceful - like a house in good order which allows us to go on completely new and different adventures. Paarmann say that there is no contribution to peace and the dissolution of outer conflicts in our present time which is more essential and more determined than the penetration into unknown realms of consciousness like those obtained through lucid dreaming and Out-of-Body- Experiences.