

## Robert Monroe's *Far Journeys*

Reviewed by Roy Salley

*Far Journeys* is the long awaited sequel to Robert Monroe's *Journeys Out of the Body*. This latter work has become an international classic in the out-of-body literature. In *Far Journeys*, Monroe describes the further development of his own out-of-body experiences (OBEs) and his development of an institute to study states of consciousness. This new work is likely to be even more widely read than his first book although, unfortunately, neither book has been, or is likely to be, widely read in current scientific circles. The world view that Monroe presents is simply so foreign to the current scientific zeitgeist that most will view this book as a work of fantasy or kookery. I view this book as neither.

More than anything else, *Far Journeys* is a road map or travel guide describing the flora and fauna one may encounter on inner exploration in consciousness. This type of literature is not new with countless renditions found in most religious and occult schools from Swedenborg to theosophy. What is unique here is the attempt to remove the trappings of religious doctrine and mysticism and to simply describe the adventures of a man who has devoted the last quarter of a century to inner exploration.

Part I of *Far Journeys* describes briefly the early experimental work with sound that led to what Monroe calls the Hemi-Sync process. This process was derived from the EEG frequency following response literature and is based on the principle that brain wave patterns will follow external auditory frequencies. Varying both the pitch and the sound frequency introduced to each ear, Monroe claims to be able to modify states of consciousness. He was granted a patent for this process in 1975. Over several years experimenting with these binaural beat frequencies, Monroe found that many subjects reported the same phenomenological experiences when exposed to certain auditory patterns.

Certain combinations of these patterns appeared to help induce OBEs. Several of his "explorers" became adept OBEers and began the out-of-body search for other life forms in the solar system. Part I describes the fruitlessness of this venture and the barrenness of the physical universe. In 1974, a breakthrough occurred when Monroe began to allow his own OBEs to be guided by aspects of consciousness other than his conscious ego; as he puts it, he "let somebody else do the driving." For Monroe and his explorers this shift opened up a universe teeming with intelligent life that exists in nonphysical form. Part I continues to describe the development of an institute designed to train others in this exploration. Excerpts from reports of some of the 3,000 people trained at the institute over the last ten years comprise the rest of this section. These excerpts document the replicability of Hemi-Sync induced experiences in others.

Part II is devoted to the further development of Monroe's experiences out-of-body. In describing his adventures, he introduces the reader to a new language (nonverbal communication) and an expansive cosmology encompassing life, death, after death experiences, nonphysical life forms, and the development of consciousness in the

largest sense. His description is captivating and congruent with many other cosmologies. *Far Journeys* is written for the lay public and is not centered in controlled research data. At present, the institute is at a data collection/case history phase of development describing phenomenological experiences across many subjects while working with Hemi-Sync technology. Hard core researchers will find little in this book to support its suppositions; in fact, the foreignness of the subject matter will find many unable to relate to this book at all. *Far Journeys*, despite its lack of controlled research, is an important work. As transpersonal psychology develops a paradigm to study inner experiences (and Ken Wilber's work is particularly promising in this regard), the rough map provided by Monroe may well prove to be a valuable touchstone. For dream workers, the book has many references to the deliberate use of sleep stages for consciousness development. A viewpoint on lucid dreaming potential is also presented significantly different from more currently accepted positions. While many readers of this book may not accept Monroe's offer to "go interstate," those that do will find the journey well worth the effort.