

# Out-of-Body Experiences

Part 4

Astral Travelling



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# 1. Is Astral Travelling the same as Lucid Dreaming?

My first astral travels occurred spontaneously during sleep, just as normal dreams. There was a difference to common dreams: I had the same awareness and consciousness as during the day. But the higher level of consciousness wasn't a criterion for me to consider this category of dreams – for I believed they were dreams – to be a glimpse of another truth. For me, they still were dreams, creations of my own subconscious and without any exterior reality. As I thought them to be mere products of my fantasy, I didn't feel bound to any kind of ethics or similar responsibilities.

A musical performance (Ballabene)

*"I went through the streets of a city that could be described as quite ordinary. Therefore it didn't have the best impression on me. 'Well, I have the rare possibility to be aware in a dream, but I end up in a completely insignificant place', I thought disappointedly. I looked round in all directions, hoping to find some attraction which could make my dream more exciting. My search wasn't in vain, for I discovered a building close by which was especially big and splendid. I hurried to the building and when I stood in front of it I noticed that it was built in a magnificent way, but still without individual style and rather standard. This appearance seemed very fitting to some administrative building.*

*I entered the house. After I had passed an ostentatious staircase, I reached a hall which was filled with quite a lot of people. Since I am interested in people, I looked at them, one by one, in a very impersonal way and without sympathy – just critically, as the saying goes. I went on to a broad stairway and up to a mezzanine floor. Through a wide opened door I reached a lecture hall similar to those ones at the university. The rows of seats were higher towards the white, bare rear wall of the hall. As some people already sat in there, I sat down as well, curious about what was to come. After a short time someone came in, in ironed dress, and took position at the lecture table. With slightly ostentatious posturing, he made known to the audience how important he was. He deliberately let them wait for a while, and then took out a clarinet and started to play.*

*'How can a dream appearance play in such a showy way on a clarinet', I thought. 'Why does he need a clarinet at all? Since when does air exist in dreams, which needed to be blown through his clarinet to create notes? It would be possible just as well that he made the music with the power of his thoughts, without any clarinet. In reality, he is just pretending to play – dream figure that he is – and what I am hearing is actually a creation of my own imagination!'*

*Some people turned round and looked at me. The musician got slightly distracted and the tones turned into a disharmonious tune.*

*I kept thinking: 'Why is he showing off with his clarinet? I won't believe that he, my own dream creation, is playing something, because I am the real creator of this,*

*through my own imaginative power. It's a bluff. This dream appearance is created by my brain, as are the sounds.'*

*The musician began to peep chaotic tone sequences, contorting his body in a grotesque way. Obviously, everyone could hear my thoughts – which wasn't a surprise to me, for these people were products of my brain, just as my thoughts were. Now the people were looking more at me than at the musician. The musician, however, now tried to ignore me.*

*'If this product of my subconscious is showing off just for me, then he should let the clarinet float and play on its own! That would be interesting for a chance, and not just a simple copy of the real world.'*

*The musician peeped, croaked and only played wrong and broken melodies now. Then he stopped and was a picture of despair. I wasn't moved in the slightest way.*

*'Well, he's not exactly a master, playing wrong notes. It's astonishing that he is performing at all in front of an audience and especially in front of me, his creator. Well, this dream phantom may do what it wants to, it will exist for only a few minutes anyway. Actually, I should feel sorry for it, as it is so short-lived.*

*Hey, look at this woman there, she uses red lipstick! That's funny! An anima that dolls herself up with lipstick. I wish I could tell this to C. G. Jung, we would laugh with delight.'*

*Suddenly, my thoughts stumbled. The music hall and the audience were gone within a moment and instead I was sitting in meditation position, in a plain and uninteresting landscape, in the middle of a dung heap.*

*'Ah, I see, some problem with my concentration', I thought. 'Well, I will overcome this. I simply have to imagine the hall again vividly, and soon I'll be back there again ... It doesn't work!'*

*Three men passed by on a way nearby, absorbed in contemplative conversation. They had very spiritual looking faces, but very cold as well. Interestingly, they wore green-black scale armours and black cloaks.*

*'Hey', I called. 'I fell out of concentration, could you maybe help me to return to my dream picture, with the music hall and this laughable musician?'*

*The three men gave me an astonished and enquiring look, then they went on without even recognising me for just a split second.*

*Again, I concentrated on my imagination 'music hall', but without success. I still was sitting on that dung heap. As my attempts didn't work out, I took a bit of dry and strawy dung to form a kind of pillow, and sat onto it so as to be less disturbed by the stench. Now the concentration was very good again, but still without success.*

*'Kicked out by my own subconscious', I thought indignantly. With this thought I awoke, and I was annoyed about this occurrence throughout the whole morning."*

Shortly after, I had another dream in which I was fully lucid:

*"In dim light, I went along a dirty street. There I saw an unclothed man standing at the wayside, who looked as if great parts of his skin had been flayed alive. He looked at me with suffering in his eyes and asked me to soothe his pain. Obviously I had raised his hopes with my light-hearted behaviour.*

*I felt flattered by his belief in me. He was right, of course. He was an appearance of a dream that was created by me. I could create and dissolve sceneries and forms. So why should I not be able to heal a dream appearance? With a bit of concentration and imagination, it had to be possible to work wonders in this inner world of images.*

*With this thought, and convinced of my omnipotence in my dreams, I went to him and declared that I had the power to heal him. I laid my hand on his shoulder and concentrated. Nothing happened. I made a second attempt – again without success. The man looked at me with painful disappointment."*

The disappointed eyes of the wounded man haunted me for days. But I didn't understand why it wasn't possible for me to control the scenes in my lucid dreams. And there was another strange thing: when the man looked at me, I received an intensive wave of his feelings of disappointment. How could a mere dream appearance express such strong feelings?

There was another dream in which I tried to begin an erotic adventure with a woman – I thought I was only dreaming, so I took her for granted. But it never happened that I got wild, because a man in the dream waved to me, implying that I should come to the table where he was sitting. I got curious and sat down beside the man. He offered me a cup of coffee that smelled lovely and tasted very well. Then he suggested – without rebuke, but with firmness, that I should exercise more self control. Totally overrun by this situation, I apologized several times.

Never before had someone talked to me in a dream, and I never would have believed that someone could reprimand me.

These incidents, especially the last one, occupied my thoughts and unsettled me. I began to doubt and reflected on what had happened. There was an uncertainty if these experiences only had been dreams and own creations, or if they had been journeys out of the body. I wanted to know the truth. So decided to stop with only wandering through the land and chatting with people in my dreams or astral travels – or whatever they were – but instead to talk consciously to the persons. There had to be a kind of logic and intelligence that made dream appearances and independent personalities clearly distinguishable.

A cup of coffee (Ballabene)

*"Again, I was completely lucid in an unknown city, and I was determined to realise my plan. I went to the first apartment building I could find and knocked on the door. An elderly woman opened and asked me what I wanted from her. For a moment I didn't know what to answer. But then I said that I just wanted to be with people,*

*because I was a stranger and didn't have friends here. I asked her to invite me for a cup of coffee and to talk a bit with me. The woman agreed and she let me in. Apparently, she was lonely. In her living room with antique furniture, a big floor carpet and a glass case with dishes, vases and figures, we sat down at the table. Around the table there were chairs with slightly curved wooden backrests. We talked a little and drank the fragrant coffee. Unfortunately, after waking up I could not remember what we had talked about. However, we both felt comfortable and at home; it was as if I just visited my aunt or another relative, there was no strangeness or mutual examination. After waking up, I enjoyed this very comfortable atmosphere through many hours."*

Another visit (Ballabene)

*"Again I went to one of the first houses and again I asked for a cup of coffee and some human kindness and comfort here in this foreign environment. At once, the woman who opened the door reacted with understanding and courtesy. She was about 70 years old. She seemed to be widowed and lonely. The apartment was a bit untidy, but apparently not because of a lack of cleanliness, but because no one ever visited her – so for whom she should keep the apartment tidy and nice? Obviously she was happy and grateful for my visit and she complained about her great loneliness. Her life merely seemed to consist of waiting for nothing.*

*I wrote a comment on this: for the first time I had the feeling that I had been useful and helpful for someone. This was making me much happier than my former search for sensations."*

On my search for human contact and the related hopes for clarification about the reality of these lucid journeys, I often visited uninhabited apartments as well. In these cases, I wandered through every single room just to find them empty.

Over time, I discovered that I could feel an auric radiation when I was attentive enough. By sensing this radiation, I could already detect if the apartment was inhabited or not when standing before the entrance. Additionally, his short "listening" allowed me to recognise – at least roughly – the mentality of the inhabitants and, by doing so, I knew if I would be welcomed or rejected. For in the meantime, I sometimes had experienced that I was expelled rigorously when I started to knock on the door and simply entered the house, as it had become routine for me. I had behaved in this impolite way because I still had the opinion to wander through my own dream world.

Apart from the cases where I was thrown out, there were other curious and unexpected incidents. One of those were when a woman who was about 50 years old opened the door after I had pronounced my usual request. Apparently, she liked the idea of a conversation with me, for she listened with interest when I said that I already had wandered around and I would like to rest for a while and find human contact. But she was silent and I was a bit lost for words, so I began to explain that my body lay in my bed at home and I was wandering about in a lucid state with my soul body. But instead of responding to this issue, which as highly topical for me,

and saying in which state she was – if she was already deceased or if she was the subtle emanation of an incarnated person – she suddenly seized my throat in a totally unexpected reaction. In the very same moment I retreated into my body with almost the same reaction speed and lay in my bed for a while, confused.

After all these experiences, in which I have become ever more sensitive and finally could clearly sense the auric radiation of the people, I had come to the conclusion that I really had encountered true existing persons and that my experiences were taking place in the world beyond. In further studies, in which I increasingly heeded the details, observing and making experiments, my conviction grew firmer.

## 2. Basic Knowledge about Astral Travelling

Astral travel or astral projection, abbreviated OBE (out-of-body-experience), means travelling through subtle planes. It does not really matter if it is doubted that this possibility exists – the important thing is that these experiences are highly exciting and allow us to grow inside as a person. With a perceptible and visible body, we experience an unknown environment that seems to be as real as the physical world. Sometimes we are even more awake and we experience everything with more intensity than in everyday life. We step into a world full of wonder and beauty. At this, we are not simply passive observers – e. g. only watching magnificent buildings – but instead we are able to knock on someone's door, to go in and speak with the people who live there. On these journeys in otherworldly planes, we may encounter loved ones that had to leave the physical existence before us.

As to the gift of astral travelling I want to say the following: I very much regret that there exist many people that have the ability to astral travel, but still do not make use of this gift of God. On the contrary, they are afraid of it. Why? Because their fellow human beings refuse it, and because it does not fit in the materialistic, standard world view. These talented people are afraid to be away from "normal". Well, is it even desirable to follow the values of our present world, values like greed for money and egoism, just to be "normal"? Is our current civilisational norm desirable at all?

Astral travelling can be an enormous enrichment for our lives. I can say from my own experiences that I have learnt to observe and assess the material world with more attention. I learnt to heed small details as well as the beauty and symbolic meaning of things. For me the world became a comprehensive book. It is ridiculous that some people say that astral travelling – and everything we can learn in them – would make us unworldly. In my opinion, there can't be a bigger lie.

Among the many things I have learnt through astral travelling, I've also learnt to better understand other people, because when encountering someone on the astral plane, you can communicate telepathically, and so you are able to understand the other one's character and behaviour. It is not possible to conceal emotions in the astral, and often, the underlying cause of the emotions lies open as well. That makes the beyond an honest world. This does not mean that there exist no abysses there. But the material world is full of abysses as well – we may not recognise that, because a lot of deception here is secret and insidious: our personality is screened on the internet, fraudsters set traps by phishing mails, Trojans, deceitful business offers and all the other things that belong to the category "social engineering". To be honest: I think that there is much more deception and danger here than in the world beyond, because there, every environment and every person is identifiable regarding their quality, and it is possible to unmistakably know the truth about them.

Take for example the following picture: it shows a gateway that leads to a lower astral plane. The ornamentations show clearly that a lower plane is involved. The truth lies open. But if anyone wants to go there, it is because he/she feels attracted to



that plane – because of concealed and suppressed wishes that they want to live out there, and which they actually *can* live out there – a thing that would not be possible in our hypocritical material world.



*Still, it had a strange beauty on it*

In many aspects, we need some experience in the astral world until we understand the circumstances and are able to use them in an optimal way. First of all, it is necessary to overcome the logical inhibition mechanisms of our subconscious. The subconscious does not allow actions and processes that are not existing in the material world. It is a control mechanism that inhibits illusions and hallucinations in our daily life. This applies to ways of locomotion like flying, floating etc. and abilities like materialisation or telekinesis.

### **Does Astral Travelling Affect Night's Sleep?**

A frequently asked question is if by astral travelling night's sleep is lost and we do not rest enough. I can say from many own experiences that this is not the case – on the contrary: recovery is even better and, at the same time, your psychic state is improving due to the astral adventures.

Many of us are caught in a job-related monotony. What would be more beautiful than to start everyday life with the memory of a nice experience? The world will look different!



## **Perception, emotions and way of thinking**

### *Emotions, feelings and perception*

Our feelings and perception during astral travel are different from daily life. We are in an altered state of consciousness – that means, mostly we have very intense emotions during an OBE. The kind of emotions we experience depends on our expectations and on our courage to explore new things. Some people have euphoric states of happiness, others are haunted by fears and don't ever want to astral travel again for this reason. The fear that is experienced here is projected onto the happenings in the OBE, but it has its true reason in a behavioural pattern of the person (tendency towards problems, fear of life).

### *Awareness and perception*

If there are too many and too fast impressions and actions while astral travelling, our perception seems to be unable to cope with it and we will easily lose awareness and drift into a dream-like state. On the other hand, we can increase our ability of perception by perceiving everything slowly and consciously: conscious perception of touch, focusing on an object to improve astral vision, checking through the astral body to become aware of our corporeality, and much more (on this, see chapter 5).

### *Empathy and telepathy*

On the astral planes, empathy (perceiving emotions of others) and telepathy are normal and common ways of perception.

### *Encounters with other beings*

On astral planes, it is possible to encounter deceased ones, otherworldly guides, angel-like and demonic beings. We often encounter friends towards whom we feel an intense bond of friendship, although we cannot remember to have met them at all. In a kind of telepathic radiation, we get the feeling of being connected to them since centuries or even millennia.

### *Astral matter*

The rules which apply to astral matter are very different from those which apply to the physical matter. Matter can be penetrated, or it becomes (ideo-)plastic through consciously used power of imagination. If reaching into astral matter consciously and pulling out one's hand again, often a kind of depression or deformation remains in the object. Materialisations are possible as well. They are easier if we "expect" them (e. g. in places where we cannot see – behind our back or behind the next street corner). Materialisations mostly do not work or only with much effort when we try to observe the process. This is easily explained: our expectations depend much on our physical experiences on a subconscious level. We may know that astral matter is behaving different from physical matter, but our subconscious is very conservative and struggles against anything that contradicts our experiences in the material world. Thus, it has to be outwitted in such a situation by doing this passive kind of materialisations.

### *Special features of vision*

We can wilfully see through walls, or even through the ground down to lower planes, if we train a bit. It is also possible to "zoom in" objects or scenery that are far away.

### *Appearance*

The appearance of people is determined by psychic laws, especially in the lower planes.

## **Differences between OBEs close to and far from the Body**

<b>States close to the physical body</b>	<b>States far from the physical body</b>
Occult term for subtle body: 'etheric body'	Occult term for subtle body: 'astral body'
The separation process is experienced consciously	The separation process is not experienced consciously

<b>States close to the physical body</b>	<b>States far from the physical body</b>
(often one is pulled back to the physical body again and again)	(one is 'in the middle of the scene' all of a sudden)
The OBE is entered tactilely (via body perception)	The OBE is entered visually
Duration: often very short, only lasting few minutes	Long-lasting OBEs, from minutes up to hours (possibly with several waking phases in between)
Body sensation: heavy floating or flying not or hardly possible	Body sensation: light floating and flying possible
Mostly no vision (wrapped in blackness)	Very detailed, vivid and colourful vision
Matter cannot or hardly be penetrated	Matter can be penetrated easily
Emotions 'normal' like in everyday life	Emotional, often euphoric
The surroundings near the body seem to be the same as in the physical	Unknown environment, sometimes strange places, seeming like another world or time
When coming to a distance from about 5-50 meters from the physical body, the state changes to 'astral state' - it is possible to see, the body feels lighter etc. (or being pulled back into the physical body through the silver cord)	One stays in the astral body, change to etheric state never occurs
When concentrating on seeing, the state can change to astral state	When concentrating on the body, one still stays in the astral state

## **Commercialisation and trivialisation**

In the ambition to make astral travelling accessible to a wide public with the help of books and seminars – and also with the intention to make the offered method a guaranteed "success" – imaginative journeys are declared as astral travelling. In many cases, these methods are accompanied by background music. Background music helps to achieve a better relaxation, but is not suitable for deep trance states, for the sounds will either repeatedly call you back to the exterior world or they will let you fall asleep. Daydreams and imaginations which are thought to be "astral

journeys" may be interesting, but they are never be fascinating. They will never lead to altered states of consciousness like astral travels do.

### **Deeper sense of astral travelling**

Astral travelling expands our possibilities of experience. A good astral journey can easily compete with a decent movie.

It gives religious and spiritual inspirations as well.

And what is more, it helps to reduce fears. If we don't struggle against it and just observe, we may be able to explain many things which we had been afraid of before.

### 3. Examples for Verification

Belief or disbelief in the real existence of out-of-body experiences is, at the moment, a matter of the world view of the person. Verification is very difficult. Thus, I had a great interest in those reports which provided a kind of evidence.

#### OBE letter 12

*"Today, something awesome happened to me (we have a free day today). I woke up around 10 am because I had a dream. I sat at my computer and as I looked in my guest book, I saw a new entry. A few days ago, I had wrote in the guest book of this girl. But now, in my dream, I saw her name and the text she wrote to me. After having woken up with a start – because I suddenly had seen the monitor very big in front of me, I went to the computer at once and indeed, everything was there in the guest book just as I had dreamt it before ... weird!"*

#### OBE letter 43

*"About 7 years ago, I had the first experience. It was after I had slept very long. Suddenly, I saw myself lying on the sofa bed from above and somehow I found this very scary. When I 'woke up' I felt very queasy. But at first, I somehow had some problems to open my eyes and to move. When I finally was 'awake', I realised that I lay there exactly as I had seen myself from above. At first I thought it was a dream, but it was so realistic; especially because I had perceived all my surroundings and this normally isn't the case when you're dreaming. After I had had some experiences of this kind, I stopped ignoring it and began to learn more about this topic, whereat a friend of mine helped me a lot. He knew the feeling, so I could speak with him about this openly.*

*Then a new situation came up when my son was 1.5 years old. He was quite ill and I always was worried that maybe I wouldn't hear him during the night when something happened, despite the baby-phone. What happened then was very weird like the first time: my son started crying and suddenly I was in his room, he sat in his bed. I wanted to comfort him, but it wasn't possible, and then suddenly I 'woke up' and via baby-phone I heard that he was indeed crying, so I went to his room. He sat in his bed exactly how I had seen him before. There it dawned upon me that this could not have been a dream."*

#### OBE letter 77

*"... my subtle/ beta body then was suddenly above the bedroom of my girlfriend, who was lying in bed with her niece ... I had a curved vision of the bedroom, like an oval ... and I wanted to attract the attention of my girlfriend. But she got frightened and yelled: 'Go away!' At this very moment, the bilocation ended and my etheric body sank down to the physical body, due to the abrupt frightful reaction of her.*

*On the next day, I told this to her – she lives 150 km away from me, by the way! And she confirmed to have had the sensation of fear at the very same time when I experienced the OBE! The phenomenal about this is that her 13-year-old niece felt that*

*someone was in the room although she could not see him ... later, she said to my girlfriend that she believed it was her boyfriend. At first, she didn't think much about this, but when I told about my experience she was of course astounded and had no words ..."*

Brita, 16 March 2001

*"I have read your reports with great interest. Something happened to me quite frequently that I cannot really interpret: 8 years ago, my husband, my son and I were in Greece. We were at the beach and all in good mood – sorrows and problems were far away. I just had a guilty conscience because I had promised my parents to call them on the phone. But I hadn't done this yet. Suddenly, I was overcome by a strong tiredness and had to think intensely of my father. I went to our camper van and laid down for a short nap. I remember very well the dream I had then:*

*I was in my parent's garden and through the back entrance I entered their house. My mother stared at me speechlessly. I went on to the bedroom and I was surprised to see my father lying in bed despite the wonderful weather. He trembled terribly and didn't notice his surroundings. I sat down on his bed and, again and again, I recited a mantra. Then I walked out again, I went past my mother and into the garden, where some neighbours stood at the fence. Then I woke up.*

*I immediately remembered the dream – I searched for the next telephone so as to make a phone call abroad.*

*My mother answered and she was very annoyed because I had went past her without greeting her. She was very angry and even accused me of not being on holiday at all. She told me to come home immediately because my father had a strong malaria attack again and the doctor had advised her to bring him to Gießen to the university hospital. She needed me more than ever. I tried to assure her that I was thousands of kilometres away from her, but she didn't believe me. She said she had seen me in the garden, walking past her without greeting, going straight into the bedroom and sitting down on my father's bed. She told me not to lie to her, because even the neighbours had seen me.*

*However, my father didn't have to go to the hospital. My mantras – or maybe the medication? - had helped.*

*I don't have any clue how I created this 'doppelganger'. Obviously, I am frequently 'running away' from my body. Years later, something similar happened. But I will tell this later maybe ..."*

Brita, 17 March 2001

*"I had a top holiday offer: 14 days in Egypt. We invited our son to this trip. But he had his 'party-lions-time' and wanted to stay at home and to spend Christmas and New Year's Eve without his parents. Somehow, we were not sad about this and were happy to travel together, just we both. Our time in Egypt was wonderful. We dived, admired the enormous, monumental temple ruins and enjoyed the fascination of the desert for 3 days. When we came back to the hotel from our desert tour, we both were*

*totally exhausted. We washed, went to dinner and after an animated conversation we went to bed – quite late, however. As always, I fell asleep quite quickly. And now there was something – I cannot describe it. If I'm recalling this right, I suddenly was aware of myself again, but I was asleep – however, I was awake, in a strange way. All of a sudden, I was in our living room. I heard the loud music from the room of our son – I heard the babble of voices, and how bottles were opened. I even smelled the cigarettes. I perceived my surroundings in a very real way. I was surprised that all the guests of my son were in his room. In the living room, there stood a girl and looked at the small Buddha statues which were in the glass cabinet of my grandmother. She opened the cabinet and took some of the Buddhas. She wanted to put them into her handbag. I was very outraged. Why didn't she just fly to Thailand and buy some for herself! I went to her and gave her a slap in the face. She staggered and clang to the sideboard. I saw that one of her earrings fell down and I noticed that she bled quite profusely. Scared, she put the statues back to the cabinet and ran out of the room.*

*When we came back four days later, this experience was still very present in my mind. Thus, I asked Kai, our son, about the incident on New Year's Eve. With a grin, he explained that there had been a brawl – but, and this was be very strange; no one except for one girl had been beaten or noticed something at all. 'Just imagine', Kai said, 'this silly cow claimed that she had stood in the living room, when someone came to her and gave her a slap in the face. But we all had been in my room!' When I tidied up on the next day, I found an earring."*



## 4. The Findings of Sleep Research

First and foremost, medicinal sleep research deals with sleep problems – apnoea, snoring, teeth grinding, sleeplessness, sleep rhythm disorder etc. Dream research is, actually, no medicinal research field, but happens as a part of psychotherapy.

What we understand by the term astral travelling is, from the above viewpoint, neither in the area of interest of medicine nor of psychotherapy. There are only few scientists that deal with out-of-body experiences as a fringe science.

The few studies which exist were conducted rather due to a personal interest of the scientists, and not because of medicinal or psychotherapeutic necessity. Two of these scientists are Dr. Stephen LaBerge and Dr. Keith Hearne. Beside Paul Tholey, who died in 1998, Stephen LaBerge is one of the leading researchers in the area of lucid dreams (LDs).

Although the happenings in OBEs are interpreted differently in the research area of LDs, valuable findings can be drawn from these researches. This includes the methods which seek to induce LDs with the help of low-current electrical stimulation (which has a waking effect). In addition, other methods have been developed which allow communication between test person and control person. This happens through eye movements in a way that has been agreed before – mostly Yes/ No answers (up/down or left/right eye movements). This is, in so far, important for the sleep laboratories because in this way it is possible to link the inner processes of the dreamer to the simultaneously recorded EEGs (electroencephalograms).

Recently, brain research has dealt with the research area of altered states of consciousness. At this, the temporal lobes of the brain have been investigated. Vilayanur Ramachandran is known on this area with his research on patients with temporal lobe epilepsy. Ramachandran states that religious states of ecstasy are related or even identical to the processes which occur in the case of temporal lobe epilepsy.

No matter which outcomes are offered by these researches, both sides (dream research and OBE research) are ignoring the findings and arguments of each other. In truth, it is a battle between different world views, and each one considers the opposing party to be led by prejudices.

## 5. Methods to increase Lucidity

The methods of improving body sensations and vision which I mentioned before – conscious perception of touch, focusing on an object to improve astral vision, checking through the astral body to become aware of your corporeality etc. – apply to OBEs close to body as well as to astral journeys. Depending on the strategy which was used to induce the OBE, you have to improve your vision or your body sensation first. If you started the OBE with visual methods (e. g. through projection or spontaneously during a flying dream), then the development of body sensation has priority.

Improving vision and checking through the body should become a habit. This is important, as a logical action can be performed only with difficulty when your awareness is low, but habits are relatively easy to carry out, even in OBEs where you are not lucid in the beginning.

### Improving body perception

Below an advisable checklist for improving body sensation and perception. In astral travelling, improvement of vision has priority in most cases, while body perception is of secondary importance.

- increase sense of touch by feeling an object which is close to you (e. g. a wall, a tree etc.)
- try to feel the ground on which you stand/ walk
- avoid walking fast or even flying
- do not turn into another direction too fast – especially in the beginning, when you do not know yet where you want to go
- avoid everything which causes fear in the physical life and, thus, could cause you to wake up – e. g. jumping out of the window
- do everything slowly and avoid hurry (because you want to see as much as possible before being drawn back to the body)

*"During my flights over the landscape, I repeatedly slowed down wilfully and tried to land. At this, it occurred a few times that I looked down to my legs and noticed that they hung down in a rudimentary appearance, while I still hovered above the ground."*

(Ballabene)

Mutilated hands:

OBE Letter 97, question: *"... on one occasion, I looked down at my hands, which were, to my astonishment, slightly mutilated."*

*Answer: This is only normal when you move around in the subtle body without having developed a proper body perception – through touching, moving and looking around. It happens in these cases that your limbs are only rudimentarily developed. After all, our subtle double is formed by our imagination (with the help of our subconscious). At the same time, the intensity of the experience and the lucidity in an OBE is highly dependent*

*on the intensity of our body perception. This is why checking through our body is so important.*

### **Improving visual sense**

It has been very helpful for my OBEs to focus on an object at the beginning, or to check my surroundings with fixing glances (slightly fixed gaze). Through this process, my lucidity always increased. Only after this procedure, I began to explore the environment.

- focus your eyes on something
- let your gaze wander over your surroundings slowly
- try to see as clearly as possible
- if you realise that you are about to be drawn back to the body, you can still maintain the OBE state by strongly focussing your eyes on some point – hold on to this point with all your strength, even if the OBE state is already vanishing

*OBE Letter 45: "In a dream, I became lucid and I was very glad about it. Suddenly, I was in a corridor, and I lifted off the ground and began to fly, for I love flying. As you advised, I also tried to concentrate so as not to fall into a dream again. But obviously I made a mistake, because I woke up again.*

*Unfortunately, this happens frequently – that I wake up – and I am always sad that I wasn't able to maintain the OBE state. I suppose that I go back to the 'safe' body because of former negative experiences (fear as well), but with this, I mess up many wonderful experiences. What can I do?"*

*Answer: In this case: do not fly, even if it is so wonderful – your lucidity is decreasing due to the fast changing of impressions, so that you fall into a dream again. Instead of this, you should observe everything thoroughly and you should try to stop any thoughts – just look around!*

## 6. General Advices on OBEing

Are there any methods to reach the state of astral travelling?

There exist some methods, for instance 'projection' or the 'tunnel method', which are commonly used in various disciplines, e. g. in shamanism. Very often, etheric OBEs can change into astral travelling (see my e-book "Out-of-Body Experiences Part 3 - Out-of-Body Experiences in the Etheric Body"). False awakening can also be practised and implemented as a method. The latter is a phenomenon which mostly begins right with the astral body or at least continues with it, although one is still close to the body and in the 'same' room (from my own experiences I suppose that in most cases no dense fluid body is formed).

Apart from that, astral travelling is a spontaneous phenomenon in many cases, although some people have developed their OBE-inducing methods to a very high level. Using and practising methods is the one side, but on the other side, meditation and spiritual immersion can highly increase the chance of spontaneously happening astral travels. These spontaneous OBEs often have a totally different and also a higher quality than the wilfully induced ones, at least after my experiences.

In the following chapters, I will describe various methods for astral travelling and the processes involved.

## 7. Spontaneous Astral Travelling

Most of my astral travels – at least the best of them – have been spontaneous. For me it rarely has been the case that I got more and more aware in a dream until this dream evolved into an astral journey. Mostly I find myself in the state of astral travelling abruptly, in some unknown place, without remembering any previous dream. I don't want to disclaim that there was no dream before, but – for whatever reasons – normally I'm not able to recall any preceding dream.

As soon as I am somewhere in the astral, I possess a full day-consciousness, so that I can decide what I want to do next. Occasionally, I find myself in an unconscious, dream-like astral journey, and then I become aware through some lucidity-triggering situation or environment. It is also possible that this awareness is caused by a very beautiful impression (emotionalisation), for example the beauty of the sun shining through autumn leaves or the colourful facades of an old town.

Above I mentioned an "unconscious, dream-like astral journey", and maybe this has raised the question: was this really only a dream before, or was it already an astral journey, though unconscious? I tend to accept the latter explanation, because these unconscious phases that precede astral journeys have no typical dream characteristics like e. g. frequent change of scenery, dominance of actions or illogical elements. These pre-phases contain walks through the landscape and, occasionally, talks to unknown persons.

Unconscious or little conscious astral travels:

- The existence of such unconscious astral travels – which are in fact not so different from dreams – raises the question: are astral travels much more frequent than assumed?
- Or does this prove that astral travels are simply dreams?  
(On this, see my e-book "Out-of-Body Experiences Part 8 – Between Dream and OBE")

Through my training of awareness – which has developed from astral travelling and also from meditations and inner attitude during the day – my dreams have changed drastically: there are no aggressions, no chases, and everything has become much more logical than before; and I wonder if – I already believe it's true – I am astral travelling several times a night.

## 8. Astral Travelling after Etheric Loosening

For description and explanation of the types of etheric body separation "take-off" and "stepping out", see the e-book "Out-of-Body Experiences Part 3 - Out-of-Body Experiences in the Etheric Body".

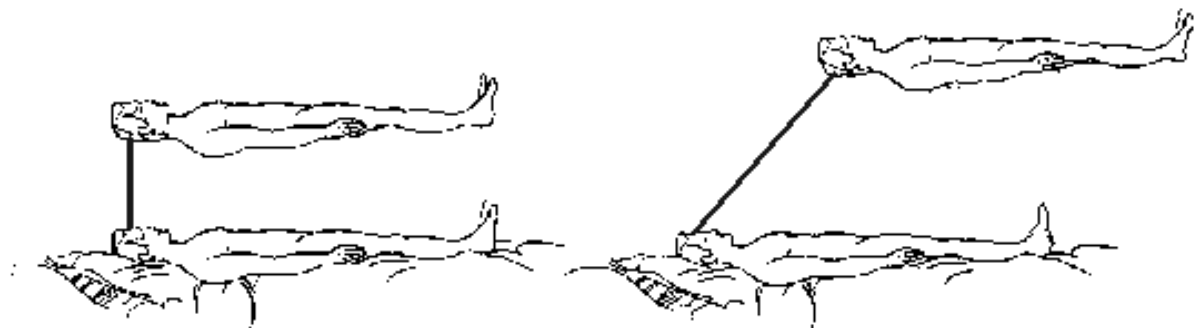
An OBE of the type "take-off" can continue and change into an astral travel in different ways:

### Carried by the wind

*"During take-offs, I often had the feeling of being carried upwards by the wind and of floating far away. The wind mostly was quite strong, but very comfortable and vitalising. I could feel it in every pore. During this, I couldn't see anything, everything was dark around me. Occasionally, I saw a white sun shining above me, like a bright hole in a wall of black velvet. At some point this journey always came to an end and then I stood in a completely unknown environment. In most cases I felt very full of strength and for this reason also very euphoric."*



Theoretically, this "being carried by the wind" follows the last stages of a take-off separation – see pictures below:

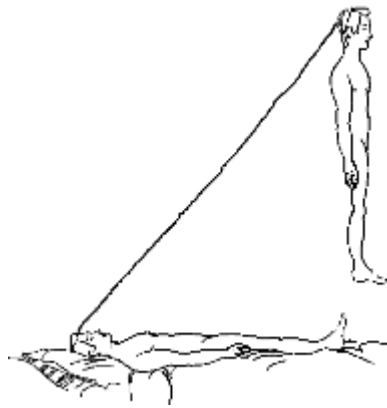


*"I became conscious when I already had left the physical body. Now I was floating in lying position, tilted left, just as if I was carried by wind or lying on an invisible stretcher. This state is called 'carried by the wind' because it actually really feels as if you were floating in airy heights where the wind is strong. This effect is caused by the*

*fluidal matter which is stirred into motion. I'd had this kind of take-off several times before and I knew what was happening. But this time it was a bit different. There was someone with me, but I couldn't see her. I could only feel her presence. She was an otherworldly guide. 'Move both arms to the left, then it is easier', she told me. So I moved my arms to the left side of the body and all of a sudden I was floating even faster and gentler, into the darkness. Though I didn't know where I went and I still don't know it because I soon lost awareness after this." (Gauri)*

### **Automatically at some distance from the physical body**

Very often it happens that a "take-off" spontaneously changes into astral travelling after one has moved a few meters away from the physical body (there are individual differences regarding the distance). This happens at the point where the astral body is straightening up (see picture below) and one moves consciously through the close-to-body environment, then leaving the room and the house.



This change of an etheric OBE into astral travel can be promoted by passing through thresholds – like doors, walls, windows etc. And it also has to be considered an astral travel when you are flying (in the etheric body, you're too heavy to be really able to fly).

*"In most of my OBEs I always find myself in the etheric body. I feel heavy and can't reach through matter. And everything around me looks quite dark, like at night-time. But after passing through the window or through the door, I always suddenly feel lighter and I am even able to fly. My surroundings become brighter and more colourful. All these are typical signs of an astral OBE. In the etheric state, everything around me is dark normally and without many colours.*

*I remember one particular OBE where there was a new door in my room, and I wanted to pass through to see what's behind. I stood at the threshold and I could see nothing in front of me, although the door was open. I was instinctively searching for a light switch, and as I found one and turned on the light, suddenly everything in front of me was colourful and bright as if I really had turned on the light. My etheric OBE then completely changed into an astral travel – I could tell this from the vividness and colourfulness of the surroundings – and the area behind the door felt like a totally different place. Somehow the door and the turning-on of the light had worked as a threshold symbol for changing from the etheric state to an astral plane." (Corra)*

### **Astral travel following after stepping out (active body separation)**

The same rules apply as explained above in "Automatically at some distance from the physical body".

OBE Letter 97

*"... Around 5 AM in the morning I got up and started meditating in the living room (aiming mostly at getting rid of my tiredness and increase my concentration). After about ten minutes I went to bed again, whereat I repeated a mantra during falling asleep (simply the name of Ramakrishna). After a short time I had the feeling that my astral body had loosened (at least that's my interpretation – a feeling of swaying to and fro – it's always the same feeling, and I still continued reciting the mantra). Then I got up in a dream (the room was filled with morning light) and went to the walls of my room. I closed my eyes and went directly through the wall, whereat I had the feeling of having to fight my way through dense undergrowth. Shortly after this I found myself on the lawn in front of our house (lying on my belly as if I had stumbled before and fallen down). The grass was dewy, and the left side of the landscape I saw was veiled in a bright mist ..."*

### **Other kinds of astral projection after etheric exit**

*"When I have succeeded in separating my etheric body, it occasionally happens that I have an astral travel right after. At this, I concentrate on the centre of my forehead with the intention to project. After that, darkness is falling around me immediately and I feel as if being in a merry-go-round which is racing forward, whereat a strong wind is blowing.*

*Or I am 'thrown' onto the ground, then I am spun around my own axis a few times and then floating upwards. In this kind of exit, I'll always see veils of colour.*

*Another version: I am sitting in meditation position (in the etheric body), doing a few mudras with my hands and within a moment I am floating upwards in the same position." (Gauri)*



## 9. Astral Travelling after False Awakening

With this headline I am referring to false awakenings which are induced wilfully. My most common method was to practise a monotonous exercise in the late morning. In many cases, I fell asleep during these exercises, but I "woke up" again after a short sleep phase. Then, when I was more aware of the situation, I tried to check through my body and then I got out of it.

### The Crystals

*I have begun to use false awakening not only for OBEs in the sense of "stepping out of the body", but also to find astral contact. Of course there are completely different affirmations needed here (with intensive longing for connection). For this it is also necessary to induce a higher, luminous inner state. This will also have an effect on the experience of false awakening:*

*"I sat in my chair where I used to practise, but in a considerably larger and empty room. In front of me, the floor was littered with thumb- to hand-sized crystals which glittered colourfully. Then the colour of the crystals changed to a soft violet. At that moment, a hooded figure, coming from the left side, passed through the room. Instantly after this, I woke up." (Ballabene)*

### Callas

*"I already thought to have fallen out of deep relaxation into the normal awake state, but I tried nevertheless and the separation succeeded, I floated out of my body. With floating steps, I hurried down the stairs. The path in the front garden was lined with many lush growing flowers. There also were two patches of wonderfully white flowering Callas. Fascinated, I stopped before the flowers, spellbound by their shining white. I practically lost myself in them and it became a gate of infinite space in endless silence, yet not empty but filled with a joyful and ecstatic state. I had forgotten myself and it took a while until I fell back into my normal consciousness." (Ballabene)*

### The Colour Factory

*"I got up at 4 AM to meditate. I meditated for a while on expansion of consciousness (inhaling through the Sahasrara, feeling vastness, with connection to 'above', exhaling and spatially expanding through the Ajna). At some point I fell asleep while doing this.*

*I 'woke up' again when I felt strong waves in my back, which intensified and shook me back and forth; but in a comfortable and soft manner. I enjoyed that and let it happen. After some time, the waves reduced and I felt my 'body' beginning to float. I didn't think much about my state but simply flew across my room several times. By now it began to dawn on me that this had to be an OBE state and instantly I decided to explore my surroundings." (Ballabene)*

## Warehouses

*"I jumped out of the bedroom window and found myself in a large urban area. Warehouses were scattered over this area. Most of them were empty and, judging from the barrels which stood there, they belonged to the depot of a paint and shoe polish factory. Everything looked very desolate and the place smelled intensively of tar, petroleum and similar stuff. The ground of the area was covered with gravel and overgrown with weeds. I crossed the yard, went in the direction of the driveway and reached a field path which led to a floodplain on the right side and to a village on the left. Nothing of all this was of interest for me and so I turned back." (Ballabene)*

## Flight through the surrounding area

*"In an unconscious, dream-like state, I found myself floating in my room. I immediately realised that this had to be an OBE. This knowledge came automatically because I'd had many similar experiences before, and though I realised my state, I did not become lucid. I flew out of the window. When I saw a man standing beside our house, I stopped, hovered a few metres above him and talked to him. I don't remember what I said. Then I inspected the garden which did not look like the real garden, it was quite bigger. At the end of the garden I turned around in the air and flew back. At this, the 'air resistance' caused a buzzing and vibrating which I felt in my whole body. I found this very pleasant and thought that it was connected to the Kundalini, so I tried to maintain this state as long as possible. In the middle of my flight, the experience ended and I lay awake in my bed." (Ballabene)*

## Nearly lucid dream

*"I took the lift downwards. When I arrived, the lift did not stop but moved on horizontally. For me this was the inner sign that a lucid dream was about to happen. Indeed, soon the cabin opened and I found myself on a street with storied houses in gründerzeit style. I was nearly lucid and concentrated on my vision. The sun shone bright and the light fell on the houses, which was a beautiful sight. Still I had a second awareness – I could feel my sleeping body. So I increased my concentration to be more present in this city landscape.*

*Suddenly I felt how someone touched the hands of my body which still lay in bed. I tried to ignore this and concentrated again. Then someone touched my feet and again my hands. My concentration broke down and I 'woke up'. Annoyed, I turned towards the girl (I thought she was my sister). The girl was obviously satisfied with the result of her behaviour, even though I was aggressive. By no means did I realise that I was not 'awake' in the normal sense, but instead in a state of false awakening." (Ballabene)*

## Three subsequent OBEs through False Awakening (Ballabene)

*"Before, I did the following exercises: Kundalini exercise with breathing up and down the spine. Then whisking. Subsequently I fell asleep.*

*But there occurred a Kundalini ascension, similar to electrical power that runs through the body but not painful. The room brightened as if through a weak flash. Then I stepped out three times:*

*1<sup>st</sup> stepping out: Through the Kundalini ascension, I became aware of my state and woke up inside. So I waited until the Kundalini phenomena had ended and then I floated out of my body. I flew through the room and then I wanted to go out. I flew directly through the glass of the patio door so as not to be delayed. I shot up into the air towards the blue midday sky. I had a lot of fun. At some distance I could see mountains with rocky steep faces. I shot in this direction. I enjoyed this very much. In mid flight I was drawn back into my body.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> stepping out: Back in my body, I tried to hold up the state and instantly flung out of my body again. This time I wanted to go out on the street. I passed through the front door and carefully observed every difference in the environment in relation to the real physical environment. The house looked different and on the right side it had an extension that doesn't exist in reality. The garden was larger as well. The street didn't continue in the direction of the hill, but there was a railway line that went up there, about 10 meters away from the position where in reality the street would have been. Instead of the street, there was grassland. I went down in the direction of Dornbach. It looked as if it was at the time of the turn of the century 1800/ 1900, with low, but very nice buildings and big gardens. Yet the street was very broad and the sidewalks too. On the sidewalk, I encountered a woman who said that she was going to a party meeting, and that she would like if I went with her. I agreed immediately, because I did not only want to look at house facades. The party headquarters was about 10 meters away from the street in a garden. Inside, it was a big hall with many tables where people sat talking to each other. Everything was organised well: at once someone attended to the woman. I stood there alone for a few moments and observed everything, when the party executive came to me. The whole thing did not look like a party meeting or a party, but it rather seemed as if this was only a disguise for something different. I didn't know for what. The party executive deliberately wanted to start a conversation with me, but I refused. I asked him if he would allow me to touch him with my finger so that I could make auric contact in this way. In this manner, I thought, I would immediately get all information without spending much time on conversations. The executive got frightened about this and retreated step by step. Shortly after, I was drawn back into my physical body.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> stepping out: In a third attempt of coming out, I was in my room. V. was there as well and I wanted to come into contact with her. The examination of persons in false awakening was my testing area at that time. But unfortunately I didn't get that far because I was woken up by some noise."*

## 10. Visual Methods (Projection)

The term "projection" refers to a method. In this method, the person tries to see through the eye on the forehead. The astral journey that follows – regardless which method was used – is always the same: a perception of the environment with full awareness and the possibility to decide what to do.

There are special 'short dreams' – hypnagogic scenes – which occur in this state between sleep and awake. They are short, dream-like sections of the hypnagogic phase while falling asleep. The state of sleep is entered in a fluctuating manner: short sequences of dream scenery, which are followed by waking states. This intermediate state makes it possible to keep up concentration on the one hand – at least to a certain degree – and to see inner images and enabling other 'dream abilities' on the other hand. The method of projection is half spontaneous (doze state) and half wilful (intended attention).

Projection works especially well in the morning, because then you have already slept enough but still are a bit tired (fluctuation between sleep and awake occurs). The essential aspect for this method is 'attentively staring into the blackness behind your closed eyes'. This method can also be used for false awakening states.

Late weekend mornings or afternoon naps are best suited for projection. When still lying in bed, with eyes closed, short dream-like sequences appear every now and then. Now you try to visualise. With 'visualising' we do not mean imaginations, but the seeing of images and scenes that form in the blackness behind one's closed eyelids. This process of seeing real pictures is often misunderstood (for the word 'visualisation' is mostly used for imaginations), so I'll give a detailed description here: it is not an active visualisation in the sense of actively imagining something, but it is a partly passive process, whereat you only give the wish to see a landscape and then you wait until it is formed on its own – as a really seen landscape. You must not doze off, it is necessary to keep up a partial awareness and concentration (but you also must not be fully awake – this is the difficult part of it, it has to be a well-kept balance).

In literature, projection is sometimes called mental travelling. The typical aspect for projection is that your focus lies on the visual sense.

Performance of projection:

- In our field of vision (closed eyes, of course), a movie-like floating through landscapes begins. Although it is not possible to create details, it is well possible to determine if we want to float over meadows or streets (by selecting the offered images). The difficult task now is to keep up concentration, so that this dream-like 'movie' will not be interrupted and make way for another movie. We have to keep up this one scenery.

- In the next step, we have to try to stop the floating. The movie should change into a static image. Still we are aware of our material body and we are like viewers of a movie.
- After this, we try to make this static image more vivid and three-dimensional. Still the image is in front of us and not in our room.
- As soon as the image changes into an open environment lying before us, we try to enter this image – by trying to perceive us as being in this landscape, or by stepping or 'leaping' into the landscape. If we succeed, we will be present in this landscape and be able to move around there.

As a result, we will stand in an unknown landscape. We are free from any automatic course of action as it is common in normal dreams. We may look around to get a first idea of this new environment. Then we can decide where to go. Some people tend to feel helpless and alone in this situation where the familiar predetermined inner course of action – as it is characteristic for common dreams – is missing. In such cases, fears can arise in these persons. Insecure people like it when others decide for them and are afraid of being responsible for their own decisions. The necessity to decide without knowing more about the world they are in now, is intimidating for them. It is possible that they will be afraid of astral travels in general and prefer to be in the familiar constraints of everyday life. But for other people, exactly this situation of taking one's own decision is the exciting aspect about astral travel, because it gives the feeling of being in an adventure. By being left on their own 'without protection', alertness and wakefulness is increased, which leads to a deeper impression of the experience.

Astral exit through looking at the blackness of my closed eyes

*"This kind of astral exit basically happens in the late morning, after I have already slept enough. I watch the blackness behind my closed eyes, while I am still drowsy and in doze. The background of my closed eyes becomes bright and I can see clouds in the upper half. Then my sight changes, so that I am suddenly standing in some place, staring at the clouds in the sky. They are the same clouds which I have seen before when I was still lying in bed and looking at the background of my closed eyes.*

*Sometimes I immediately find myself being in another place without even noticing this consciously. For instance, I am suddenly standing on a bazaar or on a marketplace in an old city. It never happens that I end up in a desolate place." (Gauri)*

There are also methods without predefined images, in which you only stare at the blackness in front of your closed eyelids. In this case, colourful threshold images will appear spontaneously when the immersion has succeeded. These streaks or mosaics are flat and not static, but in constant movement. It is like seeing colour stains on a smooth background, which are moving from one side of the blackness to the other. They are in constant movement. With increasing depth of immersion, these structures, which are simple at the beginning, will grow in complexity. For instance, a static colourful curtain will be formed, maybe moved slightly by the wind. The transition in between is not smooth but abrupt. These images are three-dimensional

and in front of us, similar to a stage. This means: we are not yet in a 3D environment, we are still in the usual blackness of the closed eyelids, but before us, at some distance, there is a window, a door or whatever – some threshold symbol. When our immersion state is deep enough, we can go through this door or window corporally – with leaping through it or 'stepping into it'. If this has succeeded, we will find ourselves in a landscape where we can move freely.



*Colourful mosaics and streaks are forming in the blackness*

## 11. Re-entering a Dream

During or shortly after waking up from a dream phase, it is possible to re-enter the previous dream consciously. For this, you have to try to imagine vividly to be present in the dream, whereat you choose the last scene you have seen before waking up. The more interesting this dream has been for us, the easier it is to imagine it again. We have to perform a difficult balancing act in this method, and this is the hardest part: we must not be too much awake and concentrated, otherwise we won't fall asleep again. On the other hand, we must not be too passive and tired, because otherwise a similar or different dream scenery will develop, whereat we will change into an unconscious, normal dream state again, without any remaining alertness.

If we manage to maintain this balance, then we should try to increase our lucidity in the now semi-conscious dream. We can do this by vividly imagining to be present in the previous 'story line'. If we succeed, we can enter the 'story line' that had been interrupted before, just as if we were sitting in the cinema. The actions of the dream can only partly be controlled by us and they go on in a dream-like manner.

*"When I was a child, I had no difficulties in re-entering dreams when I had woken up in the middle of a dream. I just did this instinctively: I stayed completely still and called the dream scenery back into my head, until it became vivid and colourful again. I remember that I sometimes felt a kind of vibrations or I felt that my body was swaying back and forth. Then, in the next moment, I would re-enter the environment where I had been just a few seconds or minutes before. The story just went on, the dream went on. That kind of dreams was very vivid, and I always was at least partly lucid. The symptoms suppose that they were semi-conscious OBEs. I did this quite often. Now as I am older, I have to learn that technique again. I regret that, for I remember how easy and totally natural it was back then in my early childhood."*  
(Corra)



## 12. Autohypnosis

In autohypnosis you concentrate on predefined suggestive images. Mostly, a visual scheme with several stages is used, in which you are entering a deeper state of immersion, step by step, image by image. Uncontrolled chains of thought and fantasies are very obstructive.

If we succeed with this balancing act (focusing on suggestive images without drifting away into fantasies), we should try to increase our awareness in the now rather half-conscious dream we are in. We can do this by attentively observing our environment. Checking through the body is another step which helps to increase consciousness.

### **Examples for visual methods of autohypnosis or deep immersion**

- Drawing numbers into the sand: We are on the beach and we draw the number 'ten' into the sand. We look at this 'ten' and then we see a wave approaching, which washes away the number. Again, we write into the sand – this time the number 'nine'. Again a wave comes and washes it away. We repeat that same process until we have reached 'one'. When this last number has vanished, we should be finished with the immersion and proceed with the next step, an astral projection induced by suggestion.
- Rainbow halls: We go through a hall that is lit with a red light. We go on the main corridor until we reach the door on the opposite side, without looking left or right. When we have passed the door, we have come into an orange-lit hall. We will go to the next door again. We are repeating this, until we have gone through seven halls at total, in the changing colours of the rainbow. When leaving the last hall, we should find ourselves in an astral landscape.



## 13. Tunnel Method



In this method, which is common among "modern shamans", the person tries to imagine a tunnel. This is accompanied by drum beats, which help to go deeper into a state of trance. In such "shamanic sessions", I noticed that I needed at least 45 minutes to get out of my daily consciousness – which was fully active, for these sessions took place in the evening after my job. Maybe the others had the same problem. However, the drum beats always lasted for only half an hour. When the results were discussed later, I realised that all the other participants only had had imaginative journeys and none of them had fallen into a real trance.

During the drum beats, the person tries to pass through a tunnel. At the end of the tunnel, a light will appear when the method succeeds, and then the person enters a landscape (in shamanism: the underworld). Tunnel experiences are also very common in near-death experiences (NDE's). But NDE's aren't a "method".

Tunnel journeys can be induced with the help of various threshold symbols. Mostly, the shaman imagines an individual cave (his/ her sacred place) which leads on to an artificial or natural tunnel. The rest of the journey is a standardised process.

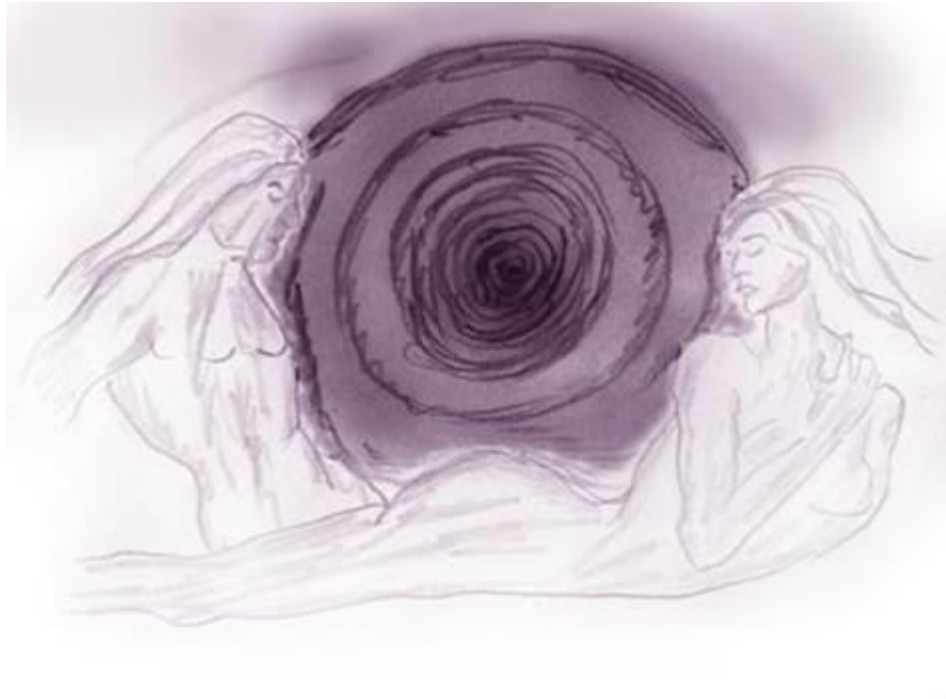
In spontaneous tunnel experiences, vortices can be formed, which initiate a state of trance. When tunnel experiences occur out of a dream, it sometimes happens that the transition is marked by a train ride (other vehicles are possible as well).

Example of a spontaneous tunnel journey, induced by a threshold symbol, from my e-book "Lilith" (no English version available so far):

*Michael sat down at the edge of the pool and looked into the water. There, the surface of the water began to ripple, as if someone had thrown a stone into it. But the waves were not moving outwards, they were moving inwards to the centre instead. In the*

*periphery of these circles of waves, he saw blurry figures moving like wafts of mist. They were slowly rotating around the water area, as if these figures were circles of waves themselves. Michael's attention was caught by the waves and moved towards the centre together with them, as if it would drag him inwards as well.*

*The water surface came closer, the vortex in its centre grew bigger and a moment later Michael was diving into the centre. He found himself in a dark tunnel and floated through it. It was a short journey, and soon he stood before an open door that led into a hallway, which looked similar to a cloister.*



*At the edge of the waves, blurry figures moved like wafts of mist*

### **Tunnel impressions and where they occur**

- in NDEs (near-death experiences)
- astral travelling
- in shamanism, where the tunnel is used to travel into the underworld or the upper world
- in dreams (tunnels as an archetypal threshold symbol), whereat the length of the tunnel varies; it can be a very long tunnel or only a narrow doorstep
- in mythology, where we can find tunnels as mouth of a cave, entrance into a hollow tree (alluding to the world tree or cosmic tree, e. g. Yggdrasil in Norse mythology) or as pit or well which lead into the land of the Blessed (underworld, e. g. in the Central European fairytale "Frau Holle" / "Old Mother Frost")
- sometimes tunnel imaginations are used as a technique for clairvoyance
- in hypnosis: tunnel imitations through spinning wheels with spirals, which draw the viewer's attention right to the centre. Sometimes simply a black dot is used.

## Tunnels in Tradition

The tunnel method was and is a preferred method of spiritual journeying in North American shamanism and neo-shamanism. It is known to many native peoples.

Recently, tunnel journeys have gained new importance through the researches on NDEs by E. Kübler-Ross. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004) was a Swiss-American psychiatrist. She dealt with death and handling dying people, also with grief work, and she is seen as a pioneer in near-death studies. She wrote many books that can easily be found on the internet.

In art, one of the most impressive depictions of a tunnel is a painting by Hieronymus Bosch ("Ascent of the Blessed"). Hieronymus Bosch (about 1450-1516) was a Dutch painter in the time of the late Middle Ages.

## How does a tunnel journey look like?

When we are floating through a tunnel, on the other end of the tunnel we will – in most cases – enter an otherworldly place. Such reports can be found in shamanism, in OBEs (out-of-body experiences) and in NDEs. In NDEs, the reports occasionally include the experience of a bright, wonderful light (often interpreted as Christ himself) which the persons would meet at the other end of the tunnel.

## Examples for tunnel experiences during OBEs:

Performance of a tunnel journey – shamanic technique

*"After various rituals – singing, connecting with totem animal (through identification) and dancing, we laid down on our back on the wooden floor. Some of the participants spread out a blanket. Our head lay on a rolled-up blanket or a small, stiff cushion. We relaxed briefly and then the leading shaman began to monotonously beat his drum. Compared with the rattle, the drum beats were loud and I could feel them on my abdominal wall. The loud drum beats facilitated staying awake and attentive, but without being prevented from a real trance. Dozing off, like it occurs when only using a rattle, is prevented in this way.*

*Tunnel journeys were routine for everyone and they were well-prepared through imagination exercises. I want to give some details here: the shaman has a sacred place – here, due to a lack of suitable places, this place is only imaginary. The Native Indians have such a place in reality and it is kept secret. From there, the shaman goes on his journey into the underworld, whereat the sacred place – often a cave – can also be visited in trance. The underworld of the Indians is in no way comparable to the Greek or Christian underworld. Instead, it is a world of living forces (individuals), with which the shaman can come into contact. He has to become familiar with these forces, only then can he ask them for help, e. g. in order to heal or to seek advice. It is in the first place the totem animal which helps and assists him when he calls for it.*

*My totem animal was a horse, which was rather unfamiliar to me as a city dweller; it was just an animal like rabbits and goats. I saw it after I had gone into the underworld through a tunnel; not from all four cardinal directions as it is usually required, but only from three. However, obviously this was sufficient. There was even an affinity, because three or four years after this, I started riding.*

*The tunnel was a starting point for everyone in the shamanic circle. Every one of them imagined his sacred cave. They entered it, or they used wells as entrance into the earth. They floated or went through a dark passage and at some point, they'd see a light that marked the end of the tunnel. There, they found themselves in a mostly natural landscape and there they connected. It was a ritual process.*

*I found it disturbing that the drumming only lasted for 30-45 minutes. Mostly I just had gone into deep trance and had the first images when the drum beats ended and everyone had to return again. What is more, with this way of immersion I always depended on the help of others and on the meeting dates. Unfortunately, I found that it did not work with recordings of drum beats." (Ballabene)*



*The author with his horse Igor*

*"Suddenly I was carried upwards, like on a roller-coaster, on a rail that led over the landscape. I heard a voice that said: 'You want to see the works of our creator? Then you have to enter a world of silence.' And at that moment, I went into a very dark tunnel with this 'roller-coaster' and then it went down very fast. It was as fast as nothing I have experienced before, it felt like 500 km/h. The tunnel was totally dark and I could hardly see anything; every now and then I saw the walls of the tunnel in a dim light. It was completely silent here, although I was travelling so fast. I knew that I was expected to be completely silent as well, and I was. I didn't utter the slightest sound, although I felt a strong pressure on my chest because I was racing along with such speed. I just sometimes had to breathe with a gasp because this pressure was so strong. Firstly I was worried to be crashed into a thousand pieces, because I could*

*hardly see what was happening and I couldn't do anything either. But then I just let it all happen and had the confidence that nothing negative would happen. At some point I slowed down, and the pressure was reduced. It was bright at the end of the tunnel, but not very bright. Unfortunately, I can't remember what happened then. I just know that I ended up in some dimly lit cave or building, but I just can't recollect what exactly was happening there. I woke up soon after that." (Corra)*

Tunnel method, from "Tara" by Alfred Ballabene, unpublished:

*As a basis for trance techniques, Carol used relaxation exercises from yoga – called savasana – supplemented by western techniques of deep relaxation and autohypnosis. Additionally, he was very interested in the trance methods of the shamans.*

*He lay down on the floor. The hard base reminded him of not being in bed for sleeping, and helped him to keep up concentration due to the slight pressure of the hard floor. He rolled up a blanket and laid it under his head, so that it would not ache. Then he turned his face to the side in order to prevent his tongue from sliding down to the back of his throat, which would have hindered his breath.*

*Carol took his induction of trance from the methods of Native American Indian shamans. For him, this was the imagination of a ritual-religious pilgrim trail that led to a sacred place: he climbed up a hill on a narrow, well-trodden path. This path led across a meadow with flowers, arched by a blue sky. In addition, songbirds were giving a vitalising atmosphere to the environment. He climbed up the hill, intentionally slowly so as to deepen the imagination. After the meadow path there followed a forest. It was a light, summerly mixed forest. It provided shade, but still there were bright clearings with richly growing herbs and big butterflies. All this made the path very varied and gave him the opportunity to include many sensations in the exercise.*

*Carol did not have to go far into the forest to reach two big rocks. These rocks were moss-covered and had flowers growing in their cracks. The blue blossoms of the forest flowers attracted the most diverse butterflies and other insects.*

*Through a big gap between the two rocks went a hardly trodden path, lined by dense shrubs. A few steps further, at the side, there was an evergreen yew tree, under which one could crawl without being hindered by blackberry twines. This was the secret entrance to a rock cave. Nobody seemed to know or to enter it. It was Carol's sacred cave, hallowed by ritual and incense.*

*In the anterior part of the cave, there was a well emerging from a crack in the rock. Under it, a small pool had developed. For Carol, this was holy and blessed water. Never did he miss to take a sip of it, with the feeling to be cleaned and blessed inside by the crystal clear liquid. Then he dabbed his face and hands with the water, now cleaned inside and outside as well. Then he knelt down and bent his head to the earth. After a short prayer he went on to pass through the mysterious cave entrance, which had a flat ground and led into seemingly infinite depths.*

*In some of Carol's deep relaxations, this tunnel was longer, sometimes shorter. Eventually, he would see a light in the distance. This was a good sign. When the light*

*appeared, his anticipation was already so great and his immersion so deep that he knew it would succeed. The sunlight at the end of the tunnel quickly came closer at that point. At the end, Carol stepped out into the open. He could never visit a predetermined place in this way. The landscape he stepped into was new and unknown to him every time.*

### **Checklist: Inducing tunnel journeys**

- Firstly, imagine a tunnel entrance. In shamanism, it is of great importance that the imagination includes the most minute details and that it corresponds to a real place (sacred place) in our material world, but this is not absolutely necessary for a succeeding tunnel journey.
- Then imagine that you glide or float through a tunnel. It can also be a railway tunnel or a rock path that you find at the entrance of a cave – this place has not to be so close to nature as it is required in shamanism, it can also be a fantasy place. Now you glide through this tunnel. At this, you stay passive, you just try to keep up your concentration and to develop a 'real' body sensation as far as possible.
- Gradually, a light should appear in the distance. Sometimes it can take a long time until you see the light. The light indicates that the exit is approaching. Take care – if you are impatient and try to accelerate everything, it will lose closeness to reality and you will drift away into pure imagination or into a dream. If you succeed to glide through the tunnel in the right manner, your inner perception and also your body awareness and sensation should increase.
- If the tunnel journey succeeds, you will step into a new, unknown world at the end of the passageway. If it does not succeed at once, it was not failure but a training which has improved your abilities.

### **Tunnel symbols in dreams**

Often, unconscious astral travels are woven into a dream scenery by our subconscious (on this, see my e-book "Out-of-Body Experiences Part 8 – Between Dream and OBE"). In this case, there often occur tunnels or similar threshold symbols. These can also be journeys with the bus or train, whereat it does not always have to be a tunnel which is passed through. Unlike journeys in normal dreams, there will always be another state of consciousness at the end of the journey/ tunnel (e. g. waking up) or an otherworldly landscape.

Some reports of tunnels as threshold symbols:

*"After a very short night – because I had sat at the computer most of the time – I laid down to take a midday nap, all churned up inside and tired out. I didn't want to have an OBE, in no case, but due to my lacking experience I breathed into the vortex – I thought this would help me to calm down. A moment later, I was in a tunnel, standing before a landscape. The end of the tunnel was like a hole through which I*

*could enter the landscape. It was an autumnal landscape and reminded me much of anthroposophical pictures." (OBE Letter 93)*

*"I lay on my back and floated in the darkness like through a tunnel. The state was induced wilfully, but I lost concentration and so, dream overlays occurred every now and then. One time I rode a summer toboggan run backwards, and another time I floated over the city like in a plane. It lasted about a minute until this 'flight' ended, whereat I stood upright and found myself in a completely new environment. I was standing in a kind of banqueting hall in a castle, and all the people there wore strange clothes that looked like those from the 18th century. When they saw me, the festival was disrupted and everyone was looking at me sceptically. The men even let their hands immediately wander to the hilts of their sabres, which were hanging at their belts. I managed to calm them down and made clear that I simply was searching for someone. But they said they hadn't seen this person. They finally relaxed and mostly ignored me, and their festival went on. It was a very interesting place." (Corra)*

## **Time travels through a tunnel**

There can also be time travels in a tunnel journey. A description of this, taken from the e-book "Der Tod und sein Lehrling" ('Death and his Disciple', by Alfred Ballabene. Solaris Verlag, Vienna, 2008; currently no English version available):

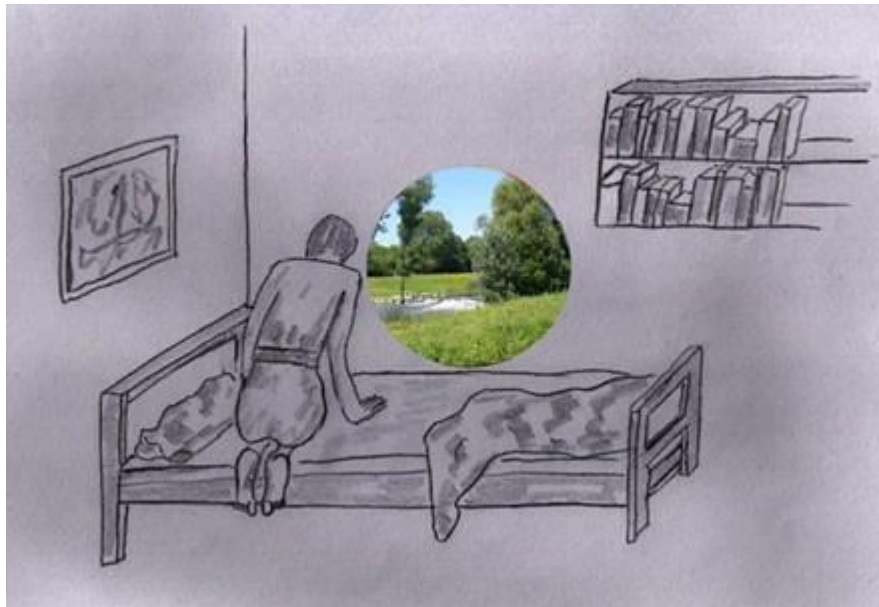
*Unlike journeys into otherworldly dimensions, time travels often were introduced by preceding symbols. Sometimes these symbols could change into vortices or be woven into the vortices. Time travels were rare, but these few insights into past lives were very memorable and emotionally charged.*



*These time travels were important for Vayu to understand life dynamics. In these journeys, he became familiar with astonishing fates. The emotionally charged happenings of these fates doubtlessly had to take effect in future incarnations. These fates were from all social classes, from different times and cultures and were experienced as man or woman. They were not only emotionally stirring, but they also showed how happenings and things could be assessed differently from the point of view of different people. It even appeared that there is no objective assessment of any occurrence and that the view is always a subjective one, because it is always linked with individual experiences. The way of how something is seen is a result of the own individual history, which prioritises different aspects.*

## Holes as "tunnels"

R. A. Monroe has described such holes in his book "Journeys out of the Body" (various publishers).



Below, a similar experience that I had, where I was stepping into another world through a hole in the wall:

### The Ammonia World (Ballabene)

*"My OBE attempt promised to be successful (method: 'stepping out'. However, the whole process went completely differently, as can be seen in the following). I felt how my fluidal matter was increasingly vitalised and I was already able to move my arms and feet. The room began to brighten up and soon I could see all the details. To my astonishment, there was a slightly opened door at the place where my bookshelf should have been. I got up and swung it open.*

*Below me, at some distance, there was the panorama of a city. A long flight of weathered, stony stairs – about fifty to hundred – led down to a street. This street led through wasteland right into the city. So I stepped down, stair by stair. My steps were*



*heavy, so as if I was moving with my physical body. Then I stood on the street and went to the first houses of the city.*

*The closer I came to the city outskirts, the more the air was filled with a pungent smell of ammonia. I never had experienced something like this before. I found it difficult to breathe and it burned in my lungs. Insecure, I slowed down and carefully approached the houses. I could already take a look into the city. The street seemed to be deserted and without a sign of life. The houses appeared to be desolate, empty ruins. The windows were black holes, the doors were boarded up crosswise. It was dead silent.*

*I stopped, looked at my surroundings and concentrated on my empathic perception. Although my lungs burned, I was tempted to go on. But somehow I felt danger and I knew that I could maybe go on for fifty meters or so without seeing any sign of life. But then, suddenly and without warning, a group of aggressive people would have attacked me. I knew this would happen. I had no connection to my physical body (this was an exception, normally I always had the connection) and so, things would have went very bad for me. Overall, the situation was completely different from anything that I had experienced before. I knew that I had to find the way back or I would have been lost. So I turned around, went up the stairs step by step and returned through the strange door back into my room."*

P. S.: I still can't say what this was and I never have experienced something similar again.

## **Some reports of tunnel experiences**

### **A spontaneous tunnel journey**

*"A new customer told me that it happened to her once that, while dozing, she suddenly was pulled through a tunnel with high speed. On the other side, she ended up in a bright amphitheatre. There, she met her uncle who had died at the age of 39, and he was completely healthy. In his lifetime, he had been paraplegic." (T.)*

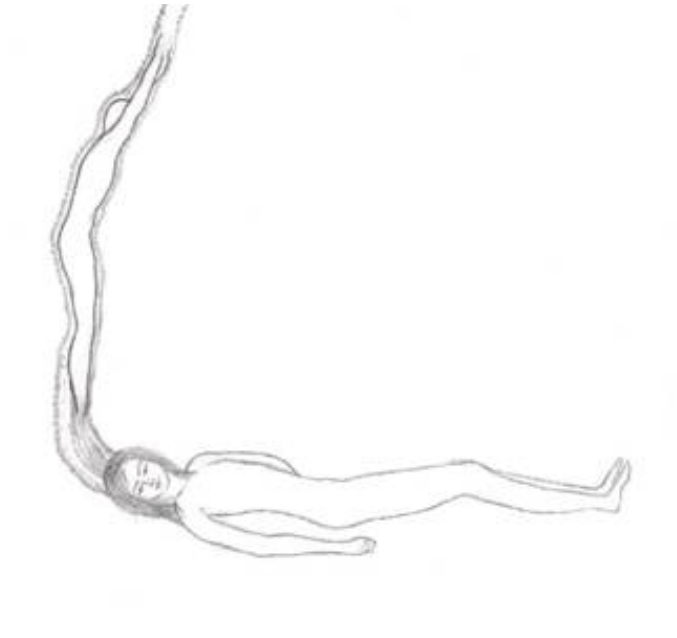
### **Tunnel journey directly out of the etheric body**

*"All of a sudden I become aware of the spectacle before my closed eyes. I can see shining, mother-of-pearl-coloured lines that are dancing around each other and back and forth, forming different patterns. This spectacle grabs my attention. Soon these lines form a round pattern that looks like a glowing star. As soon as this pattern has formed, I am sucked into it as if by a magnet. Now I float through a tunnel at high speed. Sometimes I can see the walls of the tunnel shortly before the end. These walls seem to be pattern-like, but I cannot say for sure of which material they consist. This material is unknown to me and rather looks like an organic, living matter.*

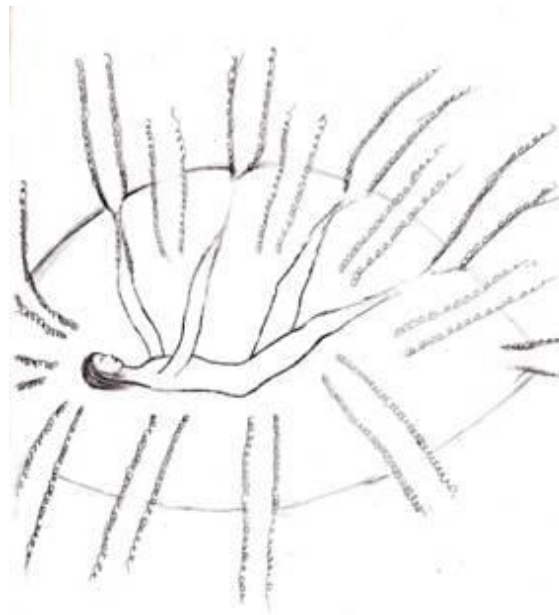
*I can never tell how long the journey will last. I do not think about it, because the journey itself already is an exciting adventure. However, the journey comes to an end when you see a light before you. This is the light at the end of the tunnel which is also reported by those who have a near-death experience. They have a tunnel journey and*

*see this light. It's the same as if you see the exit of a mine because outside it's bright or the sun shines.*

*Shortly before the arrival the velocity will decrease considerably. You'll come to an otherworldly place on the astral plane. Where exactly depends on your auric quality/vibration." (Gauri)*



*A tunnel which formed at the top of my head (Gauri)*



*Tunnels that were pulling at me (Gauri)*

## 14. Becoming Lucid in an Environment where this has Happened Before

It can occur that, when being in some place during a dream, we remember to have been in the same place in a dream before, and that we became lucid on that last time. The more often we visit this dream location, the easier and more likely it is for us to become lucid there again. During my life, I have experienced about five to ten places of that kind, and through them, I frequently succeeded to enter a lucid dream.

Below a few examples of the many experiences of this kind that I've had.

Village at the bay (lucid dream, 12.5.1997)

*"I took the lift up. The surroundings and the situation reminded me of former dreams, and I waited for the lift to start moving horizontally at the fourth or fifth storey, after which it would cross the landscape like a cable car. This happened indeed. I had a nice view and could see houses on both sides, and soon I saw a factory site with brick red chimneys. I recommended to my companion to stop all thoughts and to watch with attention. I did this as well, and my lucidity increased. My companion just looked at me blankly. Everything was wonderfully vivid and the overcast sky suddenly cleared up and the sun shone.*

*On the crest of a hill, the cable railway stopped. I got out and looked around. To the right, the hill sloped downward to a bay, edged by a Mediterranean village, with one-storeyed houses and cobblestone streets. I went downwards, and halfway down there was a fortress with battlements and tiny peepholes. It was a long building that went down until it reached the main street, where it had its entrance, but I was not allowed to enter. On the opposite side, there was a chapel, so I went there and tried to talk with the priest and a few people who were there, but we did not really come into conversation. So I went on until I reached the dock. I walked around there a bit and then I woke up." (Ballabene)*

Lift out of service! (26.10.2016)

*"I was on the ground floor of the institutional building of chemistry, my former workplace. Automatically, I remembered the lift which allowed me to have a cable car ride over an unknown landscape and that I would be lucid then. With joyful anticipation, I went to the lift. I was maybe 10 steps away from it, when I saw a metal sign on the ground. I felt that the sign would say 'lift out of service'. I was disappointed and turned to the front entrance." (Ballabene)*

University (lucid dream, 14.6.1997)

*"It began with a normal dream in which I was taking polarographic measurements. Then I finished that work and found myself in the staircase of 'our institute'. In the dream, it looked completely different than in reality, but I had dreamt of that 'dream institute' for so many times that it already had gained its own reality. The place always reminds me of former dreams. One of my favourite localities of this institute was the library depot on the mezzanine floor. Every time I enter it, I end up in a great*

*hall in the open air, with an open side where I can see the Danube Canal. This time, I already went to this locality. I was already partly lucid. Unfortunately, I could not open the door – a last resistance from my subconscious because it wanted to maintain the normal dream state.*

*I went to the lift. When I came there, I remembered that this lift often had led me to one of the upper storeys, and that it always changed into a kind of cable car floating over a free landscape. I already looked forward to this ride and to the lucidity which I would gain then. But the lift was out of service. So I went to the main staircase. But this main staircase was a part of the 'university', which – in my dreams – always led to another part of the city on the top floor. This elevated campus has castle-like walls. Along these walls, there is a way which leads downwards to the city. When I go up to the campus I always become lucid as well – it is an automatism that occurs every time. This time, the main staircase led to a broad street which led up to the campus. I already had become fully lucid when I arrived at this street. On a meadow to the right side, a flock of pigeons was pecking at the ground. Among them were pigeons with red-brown and dark-orange coloured plumage, so they were well camouflaged. I liked them really much. When I saw a woman coming up the street, I mentioned the pigeons to her, for I was a bit curious as to how the conversation would go. But the woman was a 'sleepwalker', she merely perceived that I mentioned the colour of the pigeons, but she did not realise what I was talking about, and so she gave a useless answer – she said something about an inflammation. I left the woman alone and went up the street for a few steps, then I woke up." (Ballabene)*

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