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## MORNING GENERAL DISCUSSION

RONEY-DOUGAL: Sue, towards the end of your paper you very briefly mentioned occult maps as maybe giving a clue or idea for your psychological theories of the OBE. I was wondering if you could amplify that.

BLACKMORE: I think statements that there are several layers, there is the lower astral and the upper astral and the etheric and so on, are actually attempts to describe experiences people have had. What I hope we can do is to start to look at the way thought processes differ in those different states. I can feel Carl saying you've given us a Necker cube, you know I have not got very far with this. But it does seem to me, purely from my experience, that you can by changing the way you're thinking get yourself into different states. I think the lower astral describes very well what happens if you have very loose thinking; if you're drunk or something like that, you flit from one image to another and you get monsters and you get all these things described as elementals and so on. I think they're all there and they can pop up if you have the right kind of thinking process. Take much more control of it. Start structuring your thought more clearly, start concentrating on different types of details and you'll get into something that could be called higher astral. Now I certainly don't claim to have explored very many of these, but I can begin to see the kinds of things they're talking about. Now I think we can, by trying out some of the methods that have been reported by magicians and meditators and other people in the past, learn to explore these states. I think if we can do that hand-in-hand with applying what we know of psychology to see what's happening to people's thought processes in those states, then we can start in a valuable way to put the two together. I'm being very vague and very speculative and I'm sorry about that, but that's the direction that I'd like to try and go next.

TROSCIANKO: This is a comment in reply to Carl's talk. I have to admit that your criticism of the criteria by which repeatability is judged by skeptics is unscientific, but you did mention one thing that hits people between the eyes—that was your example of a study being replicated by four skeptics, but not replicated by an equal number of believers. Now that sort of perks people up because it's unexpected. I should think that might be the way to do it. I've heard it mentioned that Research Councils and others are loath to give money to parapsychology. Well, I am sure a lot of this is based on unscientific reasoning. But one of the

things which might worry people is the concept which isn't spoken of so much now, but was a few years ago, of experimenter effects. You, Carl, get vastly significant results in Cambridge and if an experimenter effect is invoked, then it's not very cost effective to give you money, because if a bus hits you that would be the end of the effect. So if the experimenter, over a period of time, can devise techniques and experiments which don't suffer from these experimenter effects, and if some enlightened skeptics are willing to "get their hands dirty" and actually do the experiments as well as proving to the world at large that they haven't lost their marbles in any other way, then the system might work. I suppose patience is the only thing that will get you there. But I think there are ways forward and I hope that these might be explored.

SARGENT: I think there's a great deal of truth in there. First of all, I want to point out that actually I don't want any money from the Research Council, so the point doesn't really apply to me in all that much detail. But I guess the rejoinder is, that's fine, but don't pretend it's rational or scientific decision making. I think your argument has a great deal of validity to it, it's just I think it should be recognized that those decision processes do have very strong arbitrary and conventional elements.

CUTTEN: To refer again to Susan Blackmore's discussion, she is saying that OBEs are not necessarily related to psychic phenomena, there are other explanations. But that is no reason why the subject should be thrown out of parapsychology. And I would like to say that I could not agree with her more because I've had the experience myself of describing a phenomenon and attempting to give an explanation and somebody asking me "What has that got to do with psychic phenomena?" My reaction is that I couldn't care at all if it's to do with psychic phenomena as long as we are finding an explanation. It has always seemed to me that we tend to place rather too much emphasis on the word psychic. I think, for instance, parapsychology is a much more suitable description of the subject than psychic research. It seems that in some quarters if you dare to try and explain a phenomenon they want to discard it altogether and say it's not a psychic phenomenon. In other words, they're not interested in finding explanations, but only in proving that something is psychic and therefore there isn't, and never can be, an explanation. Well, if we go along on those lines we will never get any further at all, and it's almost like saying that psychic phenomena can't possibly ever be explained because when you do explain it it's no longer psychic. I think this is entirely the wrong attitude. It seems to me that the only purpose of research of any kind is to try and find explanations.

BLACKMORE: I can only say that I absolutely agree with you and I

hope that parapsychology will keep investigating all these things regardless of what they turn out to be in the end.

JENSEN: It has been said that we need more proof of the existence of ESP. I think we already have many proofs. I have conducted experiments with remote viewing that clearly indicate that ESP exists. I think you all know the procedure that has been worked out by Targ and Puthoff. The experiments are carried out by a team consisting of an agent, a percipient and two attendants or observers, one for the agent and one for the percipient. The agent observes a target unknown to the percipient who is seated in a closed room without connection to his surroundings. The percipient tells about his or her impressions to a tape recorder. We have made five experiments in the Copenhagen area with a 54-year old housewife as percipient. She gave a poor description of the first target, but an excellent description of the second target and good descriptions of the third and fourth targets. Her description of the last target was acceptable. The first target was a place called Christiania. The percipient did not say anything that corresponded to this place, but some details from the road leading to the place were recorded. The second target was the equestrian statue of King Friedrich V and his horse at Amalienborg Square. Amalienborg is the royal palace in Copenhagen. The agent, a friend of the percipient, was standing very near to the statue looking upwards so she saw the blue sky as background. The percipient said "blue, sky, can it be a horse? I think it is something in the neighborhood of Amalienborg. People are walking about and peering at something. Perhaps it is that figure. Yes, that is probably what it is. It is surrounded by a fence." Later the percipient mentioned the red sentry boxes situated near the palace for the soldiers of the Royal Guard. As you understand, this description was very accurate. You can argue that Amalienborg Square is a well known place in Copenhagen and the percipient could have guessed this place was chosen as a target. But it was not the place as such, but the monument that was chosen and the percipient described it as seen just by the place where the agent was standing. Out of a hundred possible targets in the Copenhagen area, just the right one was described. In the third experiment the target was the Stock Exchange building which is situated near Christianborg Castle. The percipient described a red building with a pointed green copper roof which was correct. She did not mention the name of the building, but she felt that the sending team was standing before Christianborg Castle looking in the direction of the bridge to the island Amager and that was also correct.