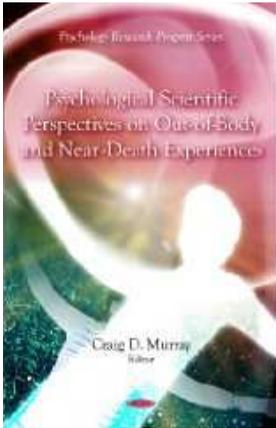

Book Reviews



Psychological Scientific Perspectives on Out of Body and Near Death Experiences. **Craig D. Murray (Ed.). (2009).** New York: Nova Science Publishers Inc. ISBN-10: 1607417057 ISBN-13: 978-1607417057 (hb). AUD\$122.00.

In recent years there has been a surge of scientific interest in the related phenomena of out-of-body (OBEs) and near-death experiences (NDEs). These experiences are altered states of consciousness in which the person may feel that their consciousness has become separated from the confines of their physical bodies. They may occur at mundane times, such as when on the verge of going to or waking from sleep, or at times of increased stress, such as during potentially life-threatening situations, or even when having been clinically dead and revived. These experiences have similar, recurring phenomenological features and cultural motifs. Both forms of experience may be characterised by lucid thinking, a belief that such experiences are ‘real’ or veridical, and may involve the observance of the physical body, others, and the surrounding environment from a disembodied point of view. Both OBEs and NDEs may be accompanied by profound personality changes. the NDE in particular, which is characterised by seemingly real encounters with spiritual beings and deceased persons, being interpreted by those having the experiences as a spiritual one which leads to changes in their world view. Since past research, there has been growing academic interest over the years to help explain the mechanism for and content of these experiences. This book brings together the most up-to-date research within the psychological sciences on these topics in one authoritative, accessible text. From developments in understanding brain function to research methodologies which probe the phenomenological depths of these experience, this book offers a timely summary of the work of leading experts on these phenomena.

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